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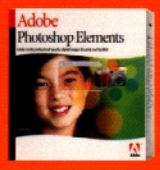
Conquer the Elements!

How Photoshop Elements can totally transform your Web site: p94



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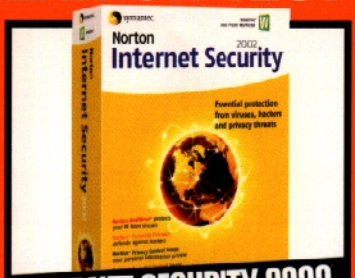

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Welcome

MEET THE CHARACTERS CHARGED WITH STOKING THE PRACTICAL INTERNET FURNACE

Thomas Watson

TECHNICAL EDITOR

Belting out karaoke tributes to UB40 comes naturally to this Caledonian crooner, but thanks to an addiction to Internet chat rooms, it seems unlikely we'll lose him to *Pop Idol* just yet

James Thornton

STAFF WRITER

Our West Country wordsmith normally writes the headlines, but if he continues partying with celebs like Spandau Ballet's Tony Hadley it won't be long before he starts making them...

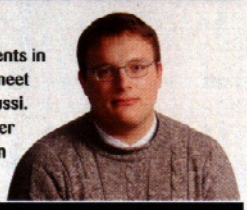
Jo Cole

SENIOR SUB EDITOR

Charged with the odious task of whipping this motley crew into shape, it's a wonder our production princess finds time for her secret double life as Dorset's premier faery finder

Paul Blachford

SENIOR DESIGNER



One of the greatest moments in Paul's life was getting to meet childhood hero Kris Akabussi. Sadly, even the jovial jogger couldn't force a smile from our downcast designer

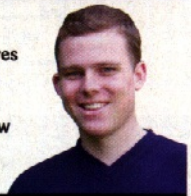
Clive Parker

NET TECHNICAL SPECIALIST

Life's hard enough as it is, without having to manage a TV station Web site and answer the queries of our demanding readers. Clive manages both with consummate ease

James Seabright

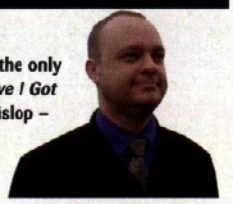
WEB SITE DESIGN SPECIALIST



Don't let James's cherubic features fool you: armed with some code and a blank document, this man is a DHTML dervish. Find out how he does it in our Home Improvement section

Chris Ellison

COLUMNIST



Physical similarities aren't the only thing Chris shares with *Have I Got News For You* pundit Ian Hislop – both are champions of free speech and vigorously oppose censorship

Welcome to *Practical Internet* and welcome also to me, Paul Newman. Long-standing readers can be forgiven at this stage for performing a swift double-take, but I'm happy to reveal that I am no relation whatsoever to the magazine's previous head honcho, Mark Newman. You may, however, remember me from my stint on the magazine a few years back.

My mandate for *PI* is clear: to introduce you to the latest cutting-edge Internet technology, bring you in-depth features on the technical and cultural aspects of the Net, guide you through the pitfalls of Web-design and show you the best ways of promoting your business online. So hold onto your hats, because I have a sneaky feeling that we'll have plenty of fun along the way.

Since I last worked on the magazine, the Internet has changed dramatically, but while there are now more people online than ever before and Internet access prices are tumbling, the same age-old concerns still exist: it's too slow, it isn't particularly secure and there are plenty of viruses to plague your PC.

Bearing these factors in mind, we kick off the issue with a guide to getting the best out of your Web browser (p24), before moving on to the vagaries of protecting your privacy (p42) and safeguarding your PC from Web-borne viruses (p50). You'll also find all the leading search engines tested and rated on page 38.

By the way, if you have any comments about the magazine, or any issues you'd like us to cover, feel free to drop me a line at the address below. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Paul Newman, Editor
(pauln@paragon.co.uk)

Inside this issue of *Practical Internet*

Unlock the awesome power of your Web browser with our guide to the hidden features of Explorer, Netscape and Opera

Want to protect your PC from viruses? We reveal how to detect and destroy all the latest Internet bugs

Manage all your email and instant messaging accounts with our breakdown of all the latest and greatest software solutions

Symantec's latest offering goes under the microscope along with the rest of the month's new software and hardware

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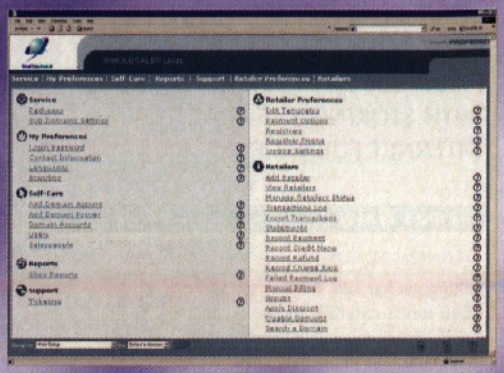

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Operating System	Linux	Linux/Win2K	Linux/Win2K	Linux/Win2K	Linux/Win2K
Domain Registration	+	+	+	+	+
Unlimited hits	+	+	+	+	+
Unlimited Domains	–	–	–	+	+
Full ASP 3.0 (Win2K)	+	+	+	+	+
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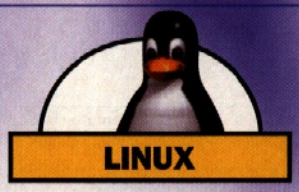
PHP (Linux)	–	+	+	+	+



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Plans	Cobalt RaQ4 r	Cobalt RaQ4 r
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Set Up Fee	£99 one time	£99 one time
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DRAM	256 MB	512 MB
Transfer limit	15 Gb	15 Gb

Plan Options	Dedicated Office	Dedicated Pro	Dedicated Enterprise	Dedicated Enterprise Plus
Monthly Fees	£99	£199	£399	£499
Set Up	£199	£249	£299	£399
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Memory	128 Mb SDRAM	256 Mb SDRAM	512 Mb SDRAM	1 Gb SDRAM
Hard Drive	20 Gb IDE	40 Gb IDE or 9.1 Gb SCSI U2W	2 x 9.1 Gb SCSI U2W	2 x 9.1 Gb SCSI U2W & 1 x 18 Gb
Raid	N/A	N/A	Mirror	Num 5
Back Up	Customer	Customer	Tape 15/30 Gb	Tape 15/30 Gb
Transfer limit	10 Gb	15 Gb	25 Gb	50 Gb
IPs	1	1	1	1
Operating System	Linux RedHat	Linux RedHat NT/WIN2K*	Linux RedHat NT/WIN2K*	Linux RedHat NT/WIN2K*

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Issue 65

Practical internet

Essentials

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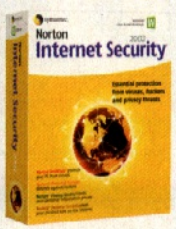

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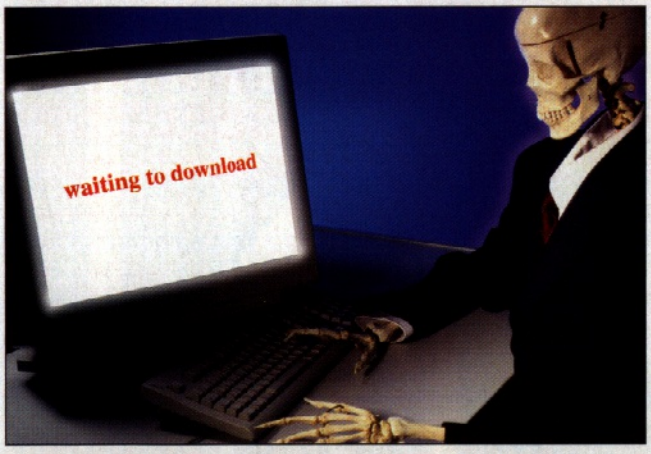

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News

All the latest Web sites, products and services

Battle of the browsers set to divide Net

AOL TAKES UP CUDGELS FOR NETSCAPE

AOL HAS FILED a lawsuit against Microsoft seeking damages for anticompetitive behaviour, opening a new front in the long-running 'browser wars' between the two Internet giants.

AOL is claiming that Microsoft has been using its dominance of the market to impede the success of the AOL-owned Netscape browser. The company decided to launch a civil suit in the US District Court, Washington DC based on earlier court findings stating that Microsoft has used its domination of the Operating System market to restrict competition.

The popularity of Netscape Navigator, which was acquired by AOL in 1999, has dropped sharply since its heyday in the mid 90s when it had a 70 percent of the market. According to AOL, this decline stems from Microsoft's 'unfair' promotion of its Internet Explorer, which now comes pre-loaded on all Windows systems.

"Considerable harm" done

AOL is asking the court for damages and wants an immediate injunction to be imposed preventing "ongoing and further damage to its product" and to "restore competition lost in the market for Web browsers." This follows Microsoft's antitrust case in the US last year where the Court of Appeals found that Microsoft's acts had inflicted "considerable harm on Netscape's business."

AOL lawyer Randall Boe said: "Netscape's lawsuit is a logical extension of the findings...that Microsoft thwarted competition, violated the antitrust laws and illegally preserved its monopoly at Netscape's expense."

However, Microsoft insists it has made every effort to work closely with Netscape and believes that the two companies should be acting in tandem to improve customers' experience of the Web.

"GIVEN THE PREVIOUS COURT RULINGS IT SHOULD BE EASY FOR NETSCAPE TO PROVE ITS CASE"

"Microsoft is disappointed that AOL has chosen litigation," said a spokeswoman for the company. "We've consistently tried to work more closely with them in a variety of areas, including instant messaging. They have consistently turned us down."

"The last thing consumers and the technology industry need is more litigation. Consumers want AOL and Microsoft to focus on market competition and technical cooperation that will make the computing experience easier."

Hope for Netscape?

Despite Microsoft's apparent call for unity between the two giants of the Internet world, legal experts believe this has come all too late for the browser market, insisting that Netscape has a good chance of winning the civil claim.

"Given the previous court rulings it should be relatively easy for Netscape to prove its case," said IT lawyer Neil Ray.

"Today, Internet Explorer has about 80 percent of the browser market. But it is arguable that had Microsoft not engaged in illegal conduct, Netscape would have a much higher share." Ray added that AOL's legal costs could be prohibitive, however.

Browser wars: The story so far

1995 – Netscape brings out the Navigator browser to huge acclaim. Microsoft releases a 'me too' browser called Internet Explorer.

1995 – Netscape Navigator 2.0 launched. It soon captures more than 70% of the browser market

Aug 1997 – After three relatively unsuccessful versions Internet Explorer 4 strikes a chord with Internet users. It becomes a key part of Windows 98.

Oct 1997 – Netscape files a lawsuit claiming Microsoft is taking illegal advantage of its market dominance in the PC Operating System market.

May 1998 - The U.S. Justice Department and 20 state attorney generals file an antitrust suit against Microsoft, charging the company with abusing its market power to thwart competition, including Netscape.

Sep 1998 – A study by a market researcher reveals that Microsoft Internet Explorer clinches the lead of the browser-share figures

May 1999 – AOL buys Netscape Communications

June 1999 – Internet Explorer 5 is launched and rapidly becomes the most popular browser on the market

Apr 2000 – Two days after settlement talks break down, the judge rules that Microsoft violated antitrust laws and consistently acted to hold onto its power over industry competitors. Microsoft instantly appeals this ruling

June 2000 – Judge Thomas Jackson orders Microsoft to split into two separate companies as punishment for flouting antitrust laws.

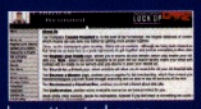
June 2001 – After hearing an appeal from Microsoft, a federal appeals court reverses the break-up order

Nov 2001 - Microsoft and the Department of Justice present a settlement to the U.S. District Court, changing the way Microsoft develops, licenses and markets its software, and communicates about the inner workings of its software with competitors.

Feb 2002 – AOL launches latest civil suit against Microsoft on behalf of Netscape.

shorts

→ Ex-cons can now keep in touch with Convicts Reunited (**www.convictsreunited.com**). The site, set up as a spoof of the popular FriendsReunited.com, has attracted over 3,000 subscribers.



→ Unmetered ISP Cloud Nine (**www.cloud-nine.com**) has been forced to shut down by hackers who jammed its networks. The ISP suffered from a denial of service attack lasting five days, preventing it from offering its customers any kind of service and eventually forcing the company to cease operations.

Got a news story? Please contact
James Thornton
Telephone: 01202 209379
Fax: 01202 299955
Email: jamest@paragon.co.uk

Pipex slashes broadband charges

IS AFFORDABLE ADSL FINALLY HERE? VETERAN ISP PIPEX CERTAINLY THINKS SO

PRICES FOR HIGH-speed Net access are on the slide, after Pipex slashed the cost of its ADSL service to under £30 a month.

The ISP (**www.xtreme.pipex.net**) has cut the price of its Xtreme Solo home user broadband package to £24.95+VAT, and is promising free connection charges for the first 40,000 people to sign up.

The price cut follows the announcement by Pipex of a £2 million Broadband Development fund aimed at delivering cheaper high-speed access for home Internet users.

Although the deal does not include a DSL modem, Pipex is offering an Alcatel Speedtouch device complete with two micro-filters for £99.95+VAT.

"The year 2002 will be the year of Broadband," said David Rickards, Managing Director of Pipex. He went on to suggest that 2002 would be the year in which "the Internet comes of age and that both home users and small businesses could join the Internet revolution for real".

But analysts reckon that before other ISPs can introduce sub-£30-per-month broadband, BT needs to drop the price of wholesale ADSL.

"Pipex are pre-empting a move by BT to drop the price for ISPs to supply broadband Internet," said Daniel Stephenson of Jupiter MMXI (**www.jupitermmxi.com**). "What's currently holding the market back is the cost and it now looks likely that BT will drop the wholesale price."

Pipe dream: Pipex has slashed broadband prices

Jordan to give birth online

DWIGHT YORKE'S EX LEFT HOLDING THE BABY ON THE WEB

Pneumatic pin-up Jordan will become the first British woman to give birth live on the Net, after agreeing to a pay-per-view childbirth extravaganza.

The 23-year-old former Page 3 girl is said to be negotiating a multi-million pound deal for fans to watch the birth live on her Web site (**www.jordanfanclub.co.uk**) in May.

According to the News of the World, live video footage of the birth of the baby boy will go out on the Net. Some coverage will be free to view, though most of the main action, including the birth of the child, could be on a pay-per-view basis.

Jordan is reported to have told a pal: "In the right hands, this could be one of the media sensations of the decade."

Snap unhappy

KODAK FORCED TO SLASH DIGICAM PRICES AFTER WEB SITE GAFFE ANGERS CUSTOMERS

KODAK HAS BEEN forced to supply thousands of customers with digital cameras at massively reduced rates, after a blunder on its Web site. The DX3700 EasyShare camera, which normally costs £329, was advertised on the Kodak site (**www.kodak.com**) for just £100, causing more than 2,000 visitors to place an order. Despite receiving emails from the company confirming their order, customers were initially told by Kodak that this was an error on the site and the cameras would not be supplied.

However, the lawyers representing the customers, Beale and Company, issued proceedings against Kodak claiming that customers were mislead by the email they received confirming their order for £100. This forced Kodak to do a u-turn and supply the cameras at £100.

James Hutchison, a partner at Beale and Company said: "Web sites must make their contract policy much clearer in their terms and conditions to avoid confusion over what does or does not constitute a contract between a customer and the retailer."

In an email to the customers who took up the offer Kodak stated: "One of our core principles is our commitment to our customers, even in difficult situations like this ."

Digicam craze no flash in the pan

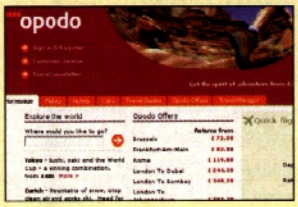
DIGITAL CAMERAS SALES are surging, with a new survey in the US revealing that take-up of digicams is growing faster than the rise in Net use.

While Net usage is increasing by only 18.6 per cent a year, the number of people using photo-editing software at home has grown by 27 per cent. In October, 27 million American PC users were dabbling in digital photography.

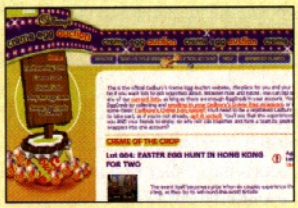
A similar trend is occurring in the UK. High street electronics store Dixons revealed that sales of digital cameras managed to outstrip that of film cameras for the first time last year.

NEW Web Sites

Useful, interesting, or just downright silly sites, uncovered by our slavering pack of news hounds



Opodo
www.opodo.co.uk
If you're gagging to get away for a Spring break but find that your bank manager has other ideas, take flight by getting a cut-price air fare from this new travel site. The site offers over 350,000 Net fares from more than 45 airlines. The service even allows you to book and fly on the same day.



Cadbury's Creme Egg
www.cremeegg.co.uk
Why do so many chocolate bars have Web sites? At least there's a point to Cadbury's latest effort, where the firm is staging a Crème Egg auction. Register for an EggCreds account and collect tokens from the popular eggs for the chance to bid for holidays, concerts and fun days out.

ACDOCO Stain Clinic
www.stainclinic.com
Life ruined by embarrassing stains? Check into the online stain clinic to conceal your shame. Whether it's blood, beer, butter or bird's muck the service is designed to find a quick and easy stain solver which can be ordered online and delivered within 48 hours.

News shorts

→ Want to hone your computing skills? New online training site Learnfast (**www.learnfast.biz**) is offering visitors the chance to study courses on technical and business matters on the Net.

→ A woman who auctioned herself for marriage on the Net has been snapped up for £251,000 – by a Mr Webb. Businesswoman Kay Hammond, 24, posted herself on auction site QXL (www.qxl.com), setting a reserve price of a quarter of a million pounds and specifying that her future spouse must be willing to get involved in media events. We'll give it a month.

Tommy's downloads

NEW FREEWARE AND SHAREWARE TO GRAB

HELLO, AND WELCOME to this new column celebrating all that is wonderful in the world of downloads. Each month, we'll give you the lowdown on the cool tools that are currently taking the computing arena by storm. The best thing is that you won't even need to put your hand in that moth-eaten wallet, because these babies are free.

Before you start downloading anything, you're best off getting your hands on a nifty download accelerator. Star Downloader is currently one of the faves at **www.download.com**, and promises to increase your Net save speed by up to 400%. With this in tow, you should be downloading files like a demon in no time.

And while we're on the subject of downloads, the best place to get your hands on your favourite tunes is undoubtedly MusicCity Morpheus. After downloading the program from **www.musiccity.com**, you should be in MP3 heaven pretty quickly.

Online chatting grows in popularity daily, and we reckon that ICQ Plus is an essential tool for the 200 million or so people worldwide who've downloaded the original ICQ. This add-on lets you completely revamp the look and feel of the world-beating chat client. Considering it's already one of the best around, a few extra features and a snazzy new interface can't do any harm. Pick it up at **www.icqplus.org**.

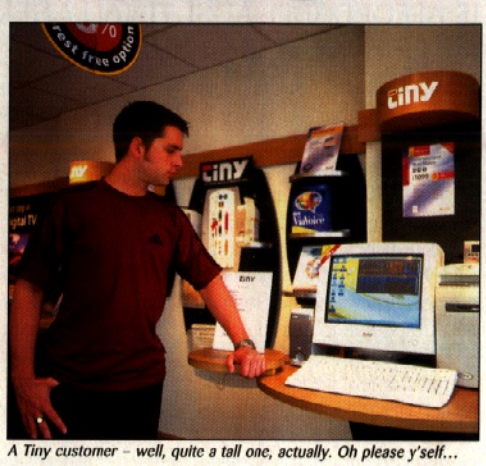
Hot Downloads

The five most popular at **www.download.com**, and how many downloads each accumulated this week

1. **ICQ 2001b** 971,856
2. **Trillian** 291,449
3. **Download Accelerator** 245,901
4. **Adobe Acrobat Reader** 97,713
5. **RealPlayer** 96,475

Time to call time on Tiscali?

PC STORE GOBBLES UP BANKRUPT TINY, BUT ENDS UP WITH TISCALI HEADACHE



A Tiny customer – well, quite a tall one, actually. Oh please y'self...

TINY COMPUTERS HAS been acquired by high-street rival Time, leaving an order backlog of around 2,500 PCs and fuelling uncertainty over Time's choice of Internet service provider. To complicate matters further, rather than simply being acquired by a bigger rival, Tiny has gone into administration. While Time is doing its best to clear the order backlog and placate punters, the acquisition is causing further headaches involving ISPs. Back in August, Tiscali UK bought Tiny Online for £8 million, on the understanding that Tiscali software would be the service provider of choice on all Tiny PCs.

"TINY DIDN'T ADJUST ITS OVERHEADS IN RESPONSE TO SALES, DOWN 40%"

Sadly, Time has its own ISP, Supanet, which comes pre-installed on all the company's PCs. "We're reviewing all deals at the moment," Time's Colin Middlemiss told *Practical Internet*. "Supanet would be our preferred ISP, but nothing is set in stone."

Tiny's big problems

Acquiring Tiny allows Time to open 150 high-street PC retailers under the moniker 'The Computer World.' Dedicated areas will showcase emerging technologies such as digital cameras and broadband Internet. But why did Tiny get gobbled up by a bigger fish? "Competition in the sector has been savage and consolidation inevitable," said Andrew Hoskin, one of Tiny's administrators. "Tiny did not adjust its overhead base in response to sales which were down some 40%. In consequence substantial losses were incurred."

If you have any questions regarding orders placed with Tiny, pop into your local store or call **0870 8303102**.

Online gaming gets touchy feely

CYBER GLOVE BRINGS INTERNET NAVIGATION INTO THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

THE DAYS OF keyboards and mice could be numbered, following the development of an innovative new electronic glove.

The P5 input device allows users to control their PCs simply by waving their hand around in space. The lightweight glove contains narrow strips that run along the back of each finger, equipped with 'bend sensor' technology that then send impulses back to the computer as the user's hand movements are detected.

The gadget, which goes on sale later this year, plugs into a PC through a USB link and will cost around £100. David Devor, vice president of Essential Reality, who developed the glove, feels that the device will bring a new dimension to areas like online gaming.

Despite the bleeding edge design, the P5 glove still looks like it was made for Freddy Kreuger

"The gaming industry is a huge market for us," explained Devor. "But aside from the gaming industry, there are many different industries. For example, an animator who sits there and designs games or cartoons."

You can get more information on the new product by visiting the company's Web site at **www.essentialreality.com**.

STAT ATTACK

Top Ten movie sites

WHICH FILM SITES ARE THE STARS OF THE PC SCREEN*

1. **The Internet Movie Database** (www.imdb.com) - 14.24% of market share
2. **Netflix.com** (www.netflix.com) - 6.88%
3. **Harry Potter** (http://harrypotter.warnerbros.co.uk) - 4.64%
4. **Moviefreehost.com** (www.moviefreehost.com) - 4.21%
5. **The Lord of the Rings Trilogy** (www.lordoftherings.net) – 3.35%
6. **Warner Village Online** (www.warnervillage.co.uk) - 2.61%
7. **DVD Forums** (www.thedvdforums.com) - 2.22%
8. **Odeon Cinemas** (www.odeon.co.uk) - 2.15%
9. **UCI Cinemas** (www.uci-cinemas.co.uk) - 2.13%
10. **Star Wars** (www.starwars.com) - 2.12%

* Warning – Some of these sites may contain explicit material

→

LOOK FORWARD BTopenworld

Now you have a CD to use the internet anytime, you may want to install it anytime.

Some suggestions for when not to install the CD:

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shorts

→ Mobile phone owners can now send photos to their handset thanks to the launch of a new online service. Eat my Phone (**www.eatmyphone.com**) lets users upload a photograph, edit it online then zap it to their mobile phone display. The service, which also contains a logo designer, is free to join and is charged at £1.50 per photo.

→ England football fans are being warned about buying World Cup tickets online. Net touts are currently charging over £900 for tickets to England matches and asking for large, non-refundable deposits. Officials from football's ruling body FIFA (**www.fifa.com**) say they are considering legal injunctions.

NEW Software

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www.sastore.com

With the number of computer attacks on the up, investing in some form of protection is a necessity these days and this suite of utilities is designed to keep pesky electronic intruders at bay. SoftClan Security Suite gives you complete control through an easy-to-use interface and restricts access to files and folders and protects the system from damage inflicted by perils such as hackers, vandals, accidents and viruses

WEB PAGE CONSTRUCTION KIT 6.5

www.mediagold.co.uk

Mac users often get a raw deal when it comes to releases of popular Web design packages, however this could all about to change following the launch of Web Page Construction Kit 6.5 for Macintosh. The software aims to give users the ability to easily knock together a site without the need for any programming know-how. It boasts text processing for editing large documents, and facilities for modifying links and backgrounds in Flash files.

REALVIEW 3D BUILDER

www.realview3d.com

Adding interactive elements to your site is a great way of getting visitors to come back time and time again. Realview 3D Builder lets users create interactive 3D animation such as slide shows and movies to add to their Web site. Visitors to the site can then examine the objects from any angle in a standard browser, making it ideal for showcasing products online.

Macromedia unveils major Flash update

ARRIVAL OF FLASH MX PROMISES TO MAKE CREATING FLASH GRAPHICS EASIER THAN EVER BEFORE

Nobody has the faintest idea why the latest version of Flash is called MX, but the word on the street is that Macromedia's update rocks

MACROMEDIA HAS GIVEN its popular Web design program Flash a complete overhaul with the launch of Flash MX.

The brand new application is designed to give Web developers the ability to knock together professional looking graphics, sophisticated user interfaces and synchronised animation complete with video playback.

Macromedia has attempted to correct glitches from Flash 5 and as a result MX comes with a new streamlined workspace designed to make it easier than ever to produce top quality graphics for the Web.

For the first time, Macromedia has introduced separate features for both Web designers and software developers, designed to make it easier for u[illegible]o get their hands on the design tools they need most.

Several tweaks to the timeline have been made including improved cursor feedback, collapsible layer folder, resizing and cutting and pasting of multiple frames. Video support has also been thrown in, supporting the import and streaming playback of video for use within both Flash sites and applications.

The range of site building utilities also boasts templates for Web page furniture such as buttons and scroll bars, so these no longer need to be created separately.

Practical Internet's own Flash Harry, Technical Editor Thomas Watson, said: "Flash MX addresses most of the problems that made previous versions a nightmare to use. It's now possible to create stunning results within minutes."

Visit **www.macromedia.com** for further information.

Hoax of the month

THIS MONTH: NET HOAXER GETS BRITISH CHESS CHAMP BY THE SHORT AND CURLIES

WHEN BRITISH GRANDMASTER Nigel Short sweated through a heated battle on the Net he believed he was facing reclusive American chess legend Bobby Fischer. However, it now turns out he was up against nothing more than a Net hoaxer.

Fischer, who achieved greatness by toppling Russia's finest champion Gary Spassky in the seventies, had not played publicly for almost 10 years before the match. His apparent comeback against Short managed to cause a sensation in chess circles.

Short changed: UK chess wizard Nigel Short

However, Fischer has since admitted in an interview on Icelandic television channel Screen One that the match up never took place. Bizarrely, the eccentric former champ went so far as to describe Short's claims as "a lot of bulls***, Jewish lies".

Short, who suffered a series of morale-sapping defeats in the tournament, likened the match to finding "the Loch Ness monster of world chess" at the time. He has now been forced to admit that he had been duped, although the identity of the hoaxer is still a mystery.

Rumours suggest that Short's real opponent could have been a computer or a team of skilled players.

It makes no census

THE 1901 CENSUS Web site was still offline as *Practical Internet* went to press, raising questions about why the Public Records Office bothered to put it online in the first place – it'd be easier to get the train to London and examine the records in person. Such was the public demand for the century-old survey that the Public Record Office's servers expired under a hailstorm of hits when its census site launched in January. There is a restricted service, which allows people to access the data from certain public record offices, but even this is up and down depending on maintenance. Check the latest progress at **www.censushelpdesk.co.uk**

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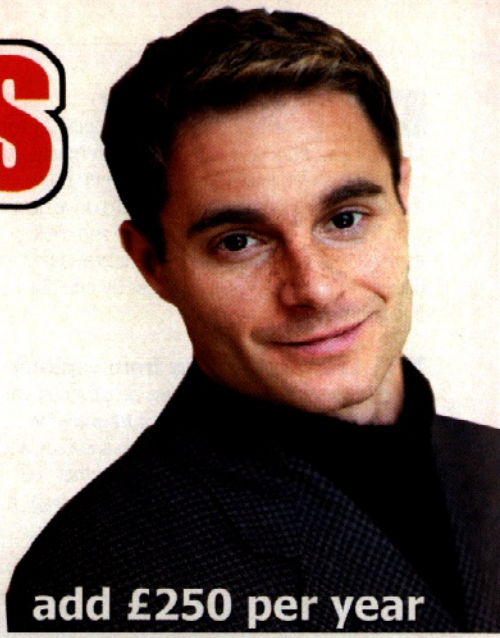

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Unlimited Autoresponders
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Success Story #12

tms media

TMS Media, of Great Yarmouth, is a busy creative agency that provides graphic design, PR & internet services to it's broad range of clients.

"Our internet department handles projects for large and small companies, local authorities, government bodies and representative organisations. So designing and maintaining everything from simple showcase sites to complex e-commerce and database-driven sites makes it essential for us to have an efficient, reliable and economical hosting service.

Our programmers particularly appreciate the pre-configured PHP and MySQL facilities, which have allowed us to develop several innovative content-management systems for clients that need daily control over aspects of their websites, and the generous data bandwidth means we can confidently offer hosting to almost every client at very competitive rates whilst maintaining our profit margins.

The simple and fast set-up procedures and incredibly versatile individual Virtual Control Panels are a valuable part of the WebFusion hosting service, allowing our designers and programmers the freedom to focus on the most important side of our business - looking after our clients."

www.tmsmedia.co.uk Steve Scott, MD TMS Media

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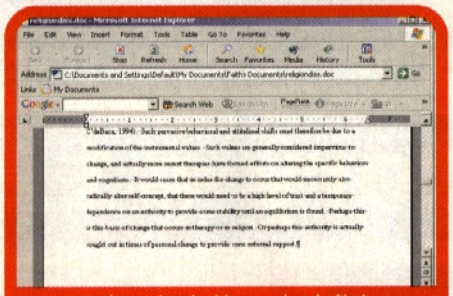
Internet Explorer

1 Use IE as a file browser

There's no real difference between Internet Explorer and Windows Explorer, which means you can make a seamless transition between browsing the web and scanning your own hard drive. Just type 'Desktop' into the Address Bar and click through folders and files using your browser or go directly to a particular file or folder by entering its full name in the Address Bar.

2 Launch programs from Explorer

IE also lets you open any program on your system through its Address Bar. Just enter the name of the program or its desktop shortcut, and the program will launch. Keep in mind that you must enter the name of the shortcut exactly as it appears on your desktop.



Internet Explorer also doubles as a handy file browser

3 View files In Internet Explorer

You can open documents or multimedia files by dragging their icons into a browser window. IE gives you the choice of viewing the files it can handle 'in-line' – that is, within the browser itself – or in their own dedicated viewers.

4 Using AutoComplete

Unless you tell it otherwise, Internet Explorer remembers the sites you've most recently visited, making it easier for you to get back there later. Enable it in the 'Content' section of 'Internet Options', by clicking 'AutoComplete' and ensuring that 'AutoComplete for web addresses' is checked. To save you from having to scroll between suggestions, select 'Enable inline AutoComplete' from the 'Advanced' tab of 'Internet Options'.

5 Email Web pages with a click

If you want to share a cool Web page with a friend, just click on the 'Mail' button from the IE toolbar: you can either 'Send A Link' to mail just the URL, or if your friend has an HTML-capable email client, you can 'Send A Page' to copy across the entire HTML file. The 'Send' command in the 'File' menu performs the same actions.

6 See what you're printing

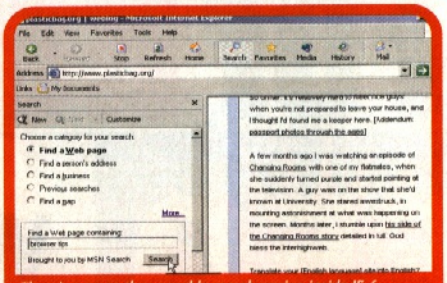
Web pages don't always translate well to the printed page, so if you normally just click on the 'Print' icon, you may end up with as many pages of ad banners as useful information. It's easy to stop this from happening: look for a 'printer-friendly' option on the site, then use the 'Print Preview' feature on IE6's 'File' menu to get a mock-up of how the page will look in print.

7 Open pages from the Taskbar

By enabling the Address Toolbar, you can enter a URL into a box on the Windows taskbar, saving you the need to open a browser window first. Getting it up and running is simple. Just right-click on an unused area of the taskbar, select 'Toolbars', and click on 'Address'.

8 Find sites with keywords

The most obvious URL for a site isn't always the right one: in fact, 'cybersquatters' often use these Web addresses for rather unsavoury purposes! Fortunately, Explorer can guide users to the right place if you enter either the site or company's name into the Address Bar. To enable this, go to the 'Tools' menu, select 'Internet Options', then click on the 'Advanced' tab. Scroll down, and you'll see a set of options for 'Search from the Address Bar'. Select 'Just go to the most likely site'.



There's a more than capable search engine inside IE 6

9 Customise The Search Assistant

Most ISPs pre-configure Internet Explorer to send users to their own portals for information. In fact, IE's search facility is much more powerful. Call it up by clicking on the magnifying glass icon, and click on 'Customize' to fine tune the search engines available. Power users will like the Search Assistant, which provides a full range of options to get to useful information fast.

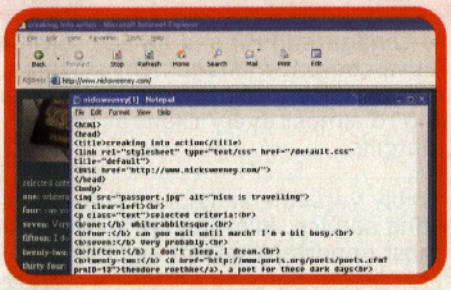
10 Manage your passwords

By default, IE6 should offer to remember the username and password to Web sites. If it's been switched off, you can turn the facility back on by going to the 'Content' tab in 'Internet Options' and selecting 'AutoComplete', then 'User names and passwords on forms'. Protect your personal data by creating a separate login profile on Windows for each person that uses your PC.

11 Automatically complete forms

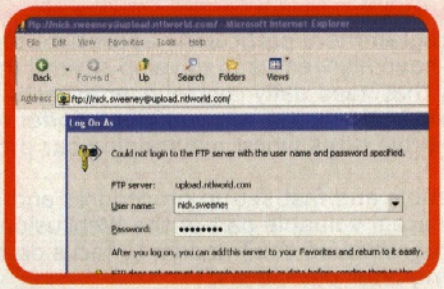
The AutoComplete facility in IE also speeds up the interminable process of filling in online forms, as long as you keep the relevant box ticked in the dialog box. You can allow your browser to suggest values, based upon previous forms you've submitted, or give it a helping hand by selecting an individual profile, which can be based upon information already contained in your Address Book, or created from scratch with as much (or as little) personal data as you wish. →

12 Using Internet Explorer's FTP feature to update the pages on your Web site



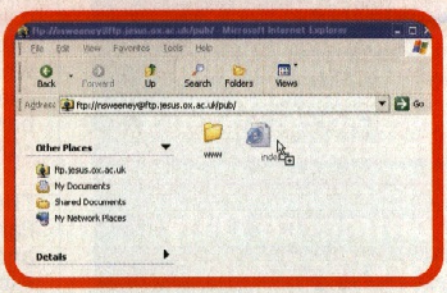
1 1. Grab the source code

It's easy to update your site with. Explorer. Add the 'Edit' button to your toolbar, load the page you want to update, and click 'Edit' to view the source code in your default HTML editor. Once you're happy save the new file to your Desktop.



2 Log in to your FTP site

Upload the page by typing the FTP address of your Web host into the Address Bar. You'll probably need to add your login name to the start of the URL (eg **ftp://myname@ftp.mysite.co.uk**) and then enter the password.



3 Drag your files across

You should now see your files displayed as if they were in a folder on your hard drive. Copy files across by dragging them from your PC to the browser window. Now use the right-click menu to load these files into an HTML editor.

50 Web Browser Secrets

THERE'S FAR MORE TO YOUR WEB BROWSER THAN MERE NAVIGATION. **NICK SWEENEY** REVEALS SOME OF THE SURPRISING FEATURES THAT LURK BEHIND THE INTERFACES OF THE NET'S THREE BIGGEST BROWSERS

You point, you click, you click again. Navigating the Web is such a straightforward process that many of us get into a groove, taking for granted the small inconveniences, and assuming that the limits of a browser's power end when you move the cursor outside the window.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Browser makers have spent the best part of the last decade stuffing their creations with up-to-date features in order to grasp an edge in a competitive market, and although the 'browser wars' ended a while ago, young upstarts like Opera continue to force ever-greater innovation from the other vendors.

The latest versions of all the major browsers offer a skeleton key to both your PC and the Internet, and since you're likely to have at least one of them up and running most of the time, it's worth getting familiar with the vast array of features usually overlooked in the Preferences menu.

You could be using your browser to navigate the files on your own PC, or transfer them to a remote host; you can hook browsers into your favourite email client, and use them to save pages for offline reading. And with the ability to write and use Javascript bookmarklets, along with toolbars that hook into the Web, the functionality of today's browsers is truly limitless.

Here's a selection of tips and tricks to help you get more out of them.

Domain Names
Virtual Hosting
Dedicated Servers
Colocation

New Control Panel!!

Hi-Speed Internet Connections
Red Hat Linux or Windows 2000
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Interfusion Lite
Web Sites : 20
Disk Space : 1Gb
POP-3 Mailboxes : 100
Data Transfer : 5Gb
£250 per year
(or £25 per month)

Interfusion
Web Sites : UNLIMITED
Disk Space : 2Gb
POP-3 Mailboxes : 1000
Data Transfer : 10Gb
£500 per year
(or £49.95 per month)

Hosting

Basic Account
Disk Space : 10Mb
POP-3 Mailboxes : 1
Data Transfer : 500Mb
£35 per year.

Economy Account
Disk Space : 25Mb
POP-3 Mailboxes : 2
Data Transfer : 1Gb
£50 per year.

Senior Account
Disk Space : 50Mb
POP-3 Mailboxes : 5
Data Transfer : 2Gb
£125 per year.

Executive Account
Disk Space : 100Mb
POP-3 Mailboxes : 10
Data Transfer : 3Gb
£200 per year.

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of no use until it is included in a Web page, you include the code as part of a demo Web page. In that way it could be viewed and tested, if only in part, in a browser.

2. Instead of simply listing code in your tutorials, you also include it in the CD that comes with the magazine. In this way the effect of readers' typing errors could be minimised.

Roy Parsons

Not sure what went wrong with your code, Roy, but your suggestion about printing a dummy Web site that demonstrates our code in operation is certainly a valid one.

I'm not sure whether we'd be able to get code onto our CD very easily – usually we just publish snippets of code that would make little impact if pasted straight into a Web browser. Watch this space, though.

Number crunching

Hi, just thought I was dreaming. Last week I saw a Sony DVD writer for £169. I checked today in PC World and the nearest price they can come up with is £499.99.

I double-checked the magazines I get and there it is – issue 63, page 14 – the Sony DRU110A drive.

OK, I then checked the Sony Web site, there it is. Hmm, no prices displayed. No order form.

I then asked **www.ask.co.uk** where I could buy one from – daft I know. Jeeves suggested the USA, so I then checked your Web site, thinking I might get some sense, but that was even more daft.

Please, please, please tell me where I can buy one from at that price.

Derek Johnson

Are you sure you didn't read this on page 860 of Practical Internet 3897? OK, OK, we screwed up on this one. However, maybe we can redeem ourselves by letting you know that the cheapest place to buy this drive (at time of going to press) is MicroWarehouse (www.microwarehouse.co.uk). Here you'll only have to pay £452.36 – a saving of £47.63 on the price quoted by PC World.

Take it to the bridge

I bought your March 2002 issue just for the article entitled 'Template-based sites with PHP'. My file on 'Lyrics of songs that bridge the generations' at **http://pgoh.free.fr/lyrics.html** was already bursting at its seams and it was impossible for me to add more lyrics since it already takes quite some time to load as it is. Your article was really very handy and came at an appropriate time.

Pgoh

No problem – look out for more advice in future issues.

Write to reply: we're happy to confim that the best price on this DVD writer is available from MicroWarehouse

WEB WATCHDOG WILL RETURN NEXT ISSUE

Attachment off the month

Bush is a chimp

This is one of the best things we've ever seen on email. As you can see, this month's picture clearly depicts a specimen several rungs below most humans on the evolutionary ladder alongside a gaggle of amusing monkeys. So close to the knuckle it's unbelievable. Our thanks are extended to Rowan Youlgreave for sending us this satirical masterpiece.

If you've received a funny or quirky email attachment that you'd like to share with other Practical Internet readers, send it to the pi@paragon.co.uk with the subject header 'Attachment of the month'. We'll print the best each month – just make sure you keep them clean.

Free Net legal advice

Richard Cohen, co-founder of The Desktop lawyer (www.desktoplawyer.net) answers your Internet legal questions for free

Email us at watchdog@paragon.co.uk with the subject Legal Aid and we'll forward your questions to Richard. Please note that we are only able to answer Internet-related questions in this section

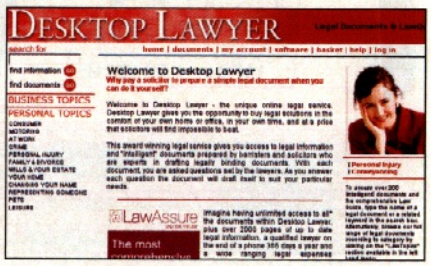
The company I work for has very strict rules governing what employees can and cannot receive by email. Receiving an email containing obscene images, for example, could result in me being given a written warning or even in my dismissal. If someone sends me a dodgy email that I did not request, do I have any defence in law should the company decide to sack me?"

Lisa Hodges

Every employer should have an email policy. If an employer wishes to enforce the policy, they must bring it to the intention of their employees regularly. Employers can do this by raising the issue during staff meetings or appraisals, a notice on the company's notice board or intranet, and email.

Your employer's email policy should tell you what to do if you receive a dodgy email. Provided you take these steps when you receive such an email, you should not be at risk of being sacked. If the email policy does not say what you should do, you should ask your employer what you should do and for them to clarify their policy. The appropriate time would be when your employer next reminds you of their email policy or during your next appraisal.

If your employer either does not have or fails to bring their email policy to your attention regularly and they attempt to sack you when you receive an unrequested dodgy email, any dismissal will almost certainly be unfair and you would have a claim for compensation. Similarly this would apply if the email policy does not tell you what to do when you receive a dodgy email.



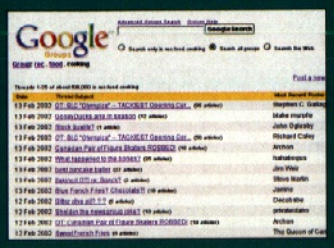
Has the Net landed you in a spot of legal bother? Visit www.dekstoplawyer.co.uk for impartial legal advice

Reader's tip

→ **BookBrain**

Having difficulty tracking down information on the Net? Then try browsing through the newsgroup archives at Google Groups and seeing if any self-appointed experts can help. To access these visit **www.google.com** and click on the 'Groups' tab.

Julia Winslow



Your letters

BT bleating

I've been looking forward to installing a nice fat broadband pipe in my house for some time now, but it's taking BT so long to send an engineer round to install it that when and if they eventually turn up, they may just find a skeleton sitting at a cobweb-covered PC.

Considering my patient wait, you can imagine just how horrified I was to learn that self-install broadband is actually cheaper than BT's service and that several ISPs can get me online in around a week. All I need to do is invest in an ADSL modem, sign up with an ISP and then flick the switch to start downloading all the multimedia content I want.

If 'do it yourself' broadband is so straightforward, why didn't BT just roll this out in the first place in association with other ISPs and put their pool of engineers to work on enabling more of the nation's local exchanges?

Perhaps it's me that's going mad, but at least, as Kingsley Amis once said "The rewards for being sane may not be very many but knowing what's funny is one of them."

Sam Coull

The ease with which Joe Public can actually get ADSL now that we have self-install broadband has taken everyone by surprise – probably because we've allowed ourselves to become just too cynical and pessimistic about broadband in this country. The advent of DIY broadband makes installing broadband easy and the wait to get connected should be significantly reduced.

It's a shame that you'll end up paying more with BT, Sam, but bear in mind that self-install still requires you to pay a fee of £55 to BT to activate your line and the modem you need is around £90. Still, at least you've managed to keep your sense of humour.

What do other readers think about the state of broadband in the UK? Drop a line to pi@paragon.co.uk and vent your spleen.

Stop hanging around for BT to get its act together and do a spot of DIY instead. It's an easy, fast and cheaper way to get ADSL

A whole host of nasties are waiting to trip you up on the Internet. Our feature in Practical Internet 64 explains how to avoid the worst viruses, scamsters, fraudsters and perverts can throw at you

Swimming success

Many thanks for your feature 'Survive The Net Jungle' (PI 64). I haven't been online long and I've found some aspects of the Net difficult to get my head around. Your article has certainly helped me to keep my head above the water and my PC online.

Sue Watkins

Happy to be of assistance!

Xat's the way to do it

I recently used the Image Optimizer from your tutorial in issue 61 and found it to be a great help in speeding up my pictures. I was directed to xat.com to buy the product for a price of £82.57, but noticed in your magazine that you said "as sold for £25"

Please could you let me know if I can buy it for £25 and where from. The trial version would not let me save the images that I had compressed. I am not a very fast learner, but with your help managed to use it, so I would be happy to pay for the product, but not more than I have to!

Janet Sanderson

Fear not, Janet: somewhere along the line we have our wires crossed. There are, in fact, two versions of Image Optimizer. One is the standard edition, which was the version featured on our cover disc and the second is a professional edition. The standard edition costs $39 (roughly £28 by today's exchange rates); while it is the professional version that will set you back $99.

Find out more about this useful utility by visiting www.xat.com and clicking on the 'Purchase' link.

It's the bullseye...

Having recently moved back to my hometown on the south coast I find, to my dismay, that I can no longer get a decent game of darts because all my old haunts have been converted into trendy wine bars. Do you know of any way that I can use the Internet to get in touch with fellow arrows fans? I've tried the British Darts Organisations Web site but, quite frankly, it looks as if it was designed by Jockey Wilson and isn't a great deal of help.

Martin Fitzmaurice

All of our searches for a decent darts site where you could meet up with other players proved fruitless, although the Professional Darts Corporation (www.planetdarts.com) has a slick online home dedicated to general darts news and information. Incidentally, could you, by chance, be related to Martin Fitzmaurice of Lakeside Town and Country Club fame? I think we should be told.

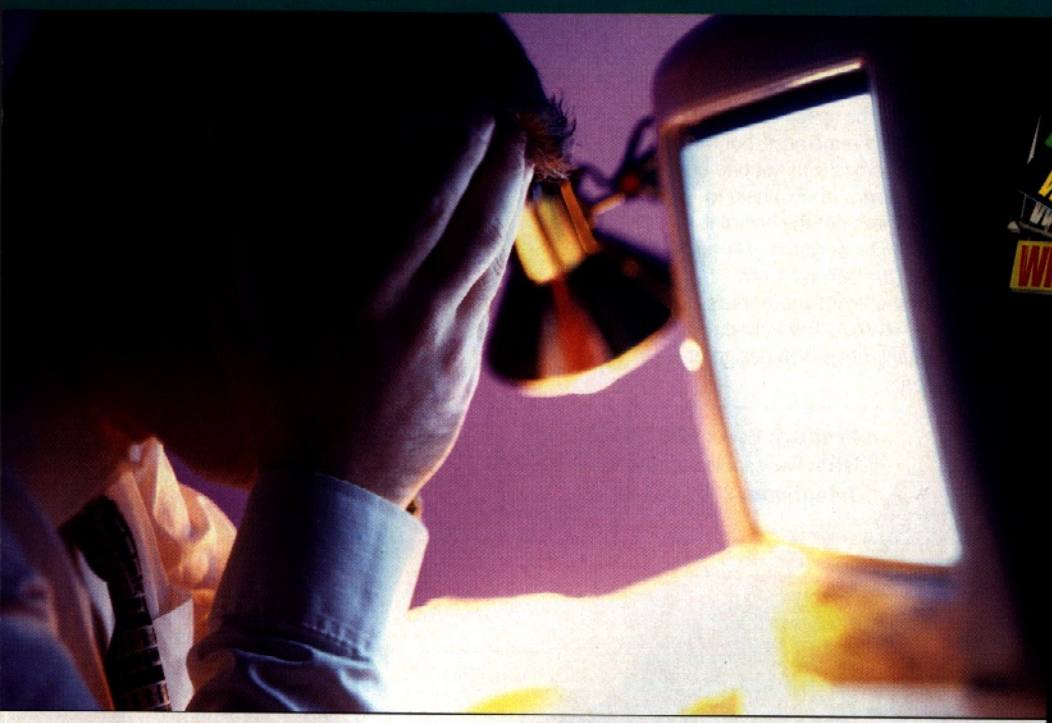
Java jive

I bought the January issue of Practical Internet and wish to comment on the article on page 70 'Make your site's menus easier to read'.

I have coded the Javascript shown into a Web page and tested it in IE 5.0, but it doesn't work. The menu options are shown in the drop-down menu, but are not grouped, ie it is a one-level list. I should like to suggest:

1. Instead of printing a chunk of code that is →

Backchat



Letter of the month

Webmaster Woes

I run a very successful Web site where I list games engines and archive my own art and original games sprites. In November, I shelled out for a **.com** address and it's been great! It gets a great flow of traffic. I pride myself on having no advertising, no pop-ups and a no nonsense layout. I work on a popular principle – I don't like pop-ups and banner ads, so why should I force them onto other people?

However, the site has cost me over £700 so far and I am trying to recuperate my losses. The problem is I don't know how I could do this without breaking the code of conduct that has kept my Web site so popular. Just getting a small fraction of my costs back would be nice, but I am unsure of how. I really want to stay pop-up and ad free, but this is getting me nowhere. I've tried my own CafePress store, but no one can be bothered to visit it.

Is there anything you can suggest to help me, because the way it's going I might shut my site down due to lack of sufficient funds! I enjoy being a Webmaster, I enjoy creating new layouts and I enjoy the great feedback I get, but I desperately want to get a fraction of what I've spent on my site back. What should I try to do next?

David Kamikaze
webmaster@kamisoft.com

Generating substantial funds from a personal Web site is never easy, as David Kamikaze has discovered

Your commitment to standing by your principles is commendable and is undoubtedly appreciated by the people who visit your site. Personally, I find adverts a real annoyance and never click on them. Encountering pop-up ads on a site usually guarantees that I won't be back in a hurry.

The problem, as you are discovering, is that it is extremely difficult to generate revenue from a personal Web site. Two ways of maximising your opportunities spring to mind, however.

First, sell out. Take adverts from trustworthy firms or sing up for affiliate schemes. Second, consider charging a small fee for the software you sell. Many small developers find this is the best way to fund their Web sites and if the quality of your programming is good enough the punters will always stump up the cash.

Ultimately, you'll earn far more from this than banner adverts, especially if your site is as popular as you claim.

Contacting us

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THE MAGAZINE OR THE INTERNET IN GENERAL? HERE'S YOUR CHANCE. EMAIL US AT **PI@PARAGON.CO.UK** OR POST YOUR LETTERS THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY TO *PRACTICAL INTERNET*, PARAGON PUBLISHING, PARAGON HOUSE, ST PETER'S ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET BH1 2JS

Competition winners

Congratulations to issue 63's winners. Julia Frost of Wilton won Cubasis VST, Lorraine Surfleet from Scarborough and Nick Dale from Cannock get copies of Cubasis Go, while Darren Barton from Felixstowe and Adrian Miller from Heston both won copies of Traktor DJ.

Top Prize

Letter of the month

We're not easy to impress, but if you dazzle us with your cutting insights or pithy wit you stand every chance of getting your hands on a copy of Serif Web Page Maker. This Web-authoring package, worth £39.99 certainly impressed us – we gave it four stars in a recent review. Find out more about Serif's products at **www.serif.com** or by ringing **0115 914 2000**

Product: Pogo
URL: www.pogo-tech.com
Telephone: 0800 100 9250

£299

Apple hits the G spot

Mac maker Apple has lagged behind Wintel boxes in the speed stakes for longer than any of us can remember, but this silver machine, which comes with not one but two 1 Gigahertz processors, should help to redress the balance. That's not the half of it, though. On top of this raw power the G4 packs in the very latest NVIDIA GeForce4 MX graphics card, 512Mb of RAM and Apple's 'superdrive' – a DVD-RW/CD-RW hybrid. Perfect for those cutting-edge Web design or video-editing moments.

Product: Power Mac G4 1GHz DP
URL: www.apple.com/uk
Telephone: 0800 039 1010

£2,583.83

Pogo to go

The name may evoke memories of jumping around like crazy at Sex Pistols concerts in the 1970s, but we're pretty certain that Pogo is a little more sophisticated. So what exactly does it do? Well, according to the blurb it utilises its own compression technology to deliver 3G-esque services. Those still a little confused as to the exact talents of the Pogo (and you can include us in that statement) might be more impressed to learn that it is a mobile phone/PDA that can browse the Net in excess of 56k and send email.

What a card

One infuriating aspect of modern technology is the sheer volume of different formats available for storing data. Take digital photography, for instance, which currently suffers from an epidemic of different memory card formats. Fortunately, a solution to this misery has arrived in the shape of Imation's FlashGo! USB card reader. This versatile little gadget is compatible with Compact Flash, Smart Media, Multimedia cards, the Sony memory stick format and even IBM's microdrive.

Product: FlashGo! Memory Card Reader
URL: www.imationltd.co.uk
Telephone: 01344 402000

£70

You hardwear it well

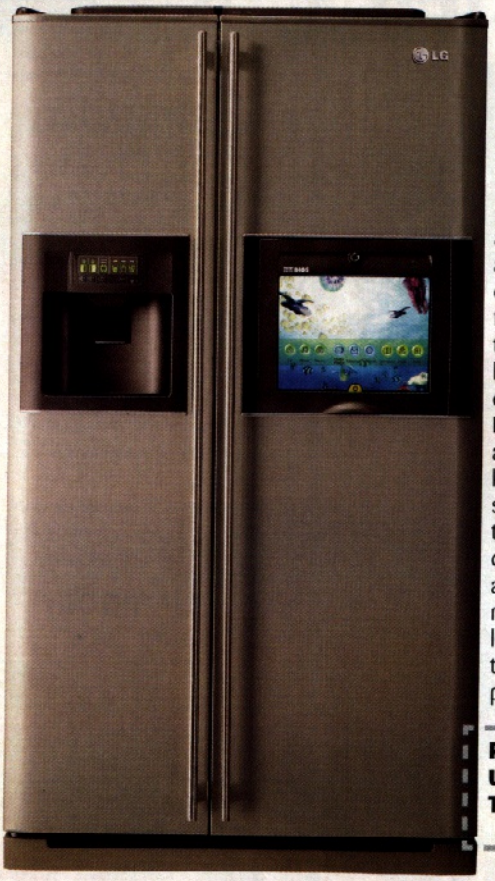
The concept of a wearable PC is one that cyber boffins have been ruminating over for a fair few years, but if this piece of kit is anything to go by it may not be long before we're all scuttling around town and trying to dodge traffic as we compose our emails. Although strangely reminiscent of a device seen in *A Clockwork Orange*, the Poma's headset gives users the impression they are staring at a 13-inch monitor. The device runs Windows CE, features a 128MHz processor and should go on sale in the UK late in 2002.

Product: Poma Wearable PC
URL: www.xybernaut.com
Telephone: 001 888 992 3777

$1,400

iCandy

We take a look at the latest and greatest objects of desire



Chiller killer

It remains to be seen whether demand actually exists for a household appliance other than a computer that can play MP3 files, send email and browse the Web; but LG electronics hopes to sew up this emerging market with its Internet fridge. Net novelties aside, the chief benefit of this kitchen utility is the built-in screen which keeps track of the fridge's contents, proffers dietary advice and even allows you to record video messages – perfect for lecturing anyone who leaves the top off the milk. The price? A cool £8,000.

Product: LG Internet fridge
URL: www.lge.co.uk
Telephone: 0870 607554

£8,000

Product: 194 Exertris Bike
URL: www.exertris.com
Telephone: 020 7401 0980

£4,112.50

On yer bike!

Does the thought of undertaking strenuous activity without connectivity worry you? Then here's the ideal solution – an Internet-enabled exercise bike. The Exertris, to give it its proper name, allows game-crazy fitness freaks to play arcade games against each other while they burn off the calories. Instead of a 10p piece, though, you'll need pure pedal power to play – the harder you pedal, the more likely your chance of success. Players pit their wits against either the Exertris's onboard computer or other networked exercisers.

Street surfing

Next time you're waiting for a train, mooching around in the departure lounge of an airport or chewing the fat at your local community centre, there's every chance you'll bump into a WebPoint Kiosk. These striking devices offer Internet access to those who live their lives on the move. One 50p piece can be swapped for five minutes of email or surfing time, although you can extend this with additional coins should you want to take full advantage of the hefty 500k Internet connection.

Product: Web Point Kiosk
URL: www.webpoint-kiosk.com
Telephone: 01273 328000

50P FOR FIVE MINUTES

Product: Sony DSC F707
URL: www.sony.co.uk
Telephone: 0990 111999

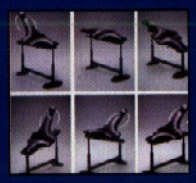
£1,000

Zeiss, Zeiss baby

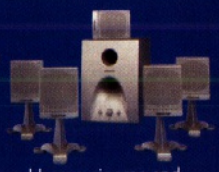
Sony's latest digicam leaves the *Practical Internet* team struggling to wipe the drool from our jerseys. Like the perfect partner, the DSC F707 comes equipped with both brains and beauty. It also boasts plenty of brawn, with a hefty maximum resolution of 5.0 megapixels, 5x optical zoom, 10x digital precision zoom and the ability to capture both still images and digital video. There's also a multi-angle CarlZeiss lens to really give you the edge over rival lensmen. This camera is, like the price tag, for serious photographers only.

News

shorts



→ A new gadget claiming to be 'the most fun you can have with your clothes off" is now available on the Net. The 'LuvSeat', is the brainchild of 61-year-Richard Harris and is designed to let users "explore lovemaking positions that ordinary beds simply won't support." Find out more at **www.luvseat.com**.



→ The name suggest it's a mid-range motorcycle, but the ZXR-500 is actually designed to turn your PC into a thundering surround sound home cinema and gaming system. The 5.1 channel speaker set from Videologic costs £79.99 and includes dual flared subwoofer bass ports plus a tuned amplifier. See (**www.videologic.com**) for more details.

Nearly half of UK connected

UK NET SERVICES AMONG THE BEST IN THE WORLD SAYS OFTEL REPORT – JUST DON'T MENTION BROADBAND...

Almost 50 percent of UK homes are now connected to the Internet

NEARLY HALF OF all UK homes now has an Internet connection, according to a new report by Oftel (**www.oftel.gov.uk**).

Publishing its latest research into Net usage, the telecoms regulator found that 45 percent of British homes are now connected to the Net, compared to just 30 percent at the same time last year.

The report, which covers narrowband dial-up access, also highlights the rise in popularity of unmetered Net connections which, it suggests, account for four million of the 11 million Internet-enabled homes in the UK.

Oftel says that the report shows that customers are satisfied with the range and price of dial-up ISPs on offer.

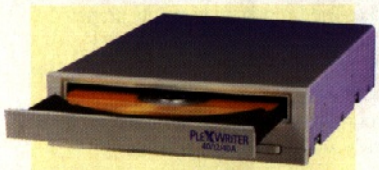
"Oftel's review of the Internet access market shows that consumers have access to a wide range of services and prices for using the Internet that are among the best in the world," said Dave Edmonds, Oftel's Director General of Telecommunications.

"Dial-up narrowband Internet access is how most consumers start using the Internet, so it is important we have a thriving and competitive Internet access market."

However, the report doesn't include figures for broadband access in Britain which, according to experts, is in a worse state than many other countries.

More info

The most common form of dial-up access is still pay-as-you go, which accounts for 40% of all Internet users according to the Oftel survey. This represents a drop of 13% on the same period last year. However, the fastest growing area, is fully unmetered access, which makes up 28% of the UK's Net access market. 21% of Net users currently pay both a monthly subscription and call charges.



The write stuff

CD BURNING JUST GOT FASTER, MUCH FASTER

PLEXTOR HAS LAUNCHED a new internal CD-RW drive that claims to send disc writing speeds into overdrive. The PlexWriter 40/12/40A comes with the tag of being the world's first 40-speed CD-ReWritable drive. What this means to your everyday Net user is that it can burn a whole CD's worth of MP3 files in under three minutes.

The PlexWriter also features the use of a black tray to reduce jitter and an optimised print circuit board to cut down noise and produce higher quality results. The device costs £139+VAT and further details are available from **www.plextor.com**.

Smarter living

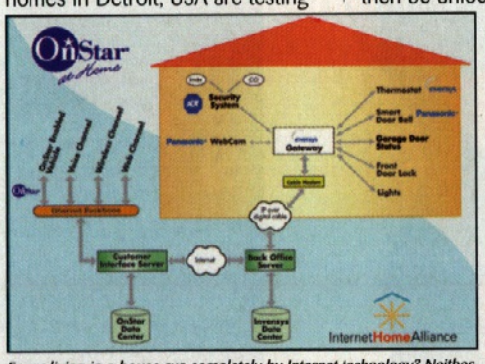
CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT THE NET? THEN TRY LIVING IN A HOUSE CONTROLLED BY THE NET

YOU COULD SOON be watering your plants with your mobile phone or locking your front door from the office if the latest technology from The Internet Home Alliance Group (**www.internethomealliance.com**) takes off.

The firm is trialling a system that lets you control your home from any location using cutting-edge Internet developments. Over 100 homes in Detroit, USA are testing the system, which allows them to control a range of household functions such as locking and unlocking doors, operating the security system, and turning lights on and off.

The system also features a 'smart front door' that checks whenever anyone calls at the house and lets users know by email, text message or via a Web site. The door can then be unlocked remotely to let this person in.

"The families that participate in the OnStar at Home pilot will be able to take advantage of emerging technology solutions to solve everyday problems," said Tony Barra, president of The Internet Home Alliance Group.



Fancy living in a house run completely by Internet technology? Neither do we, but we'd settle for a 2Mb line any day

HOT Web gear

Practical Internet trawls the Web's bargain bins to pick out the best deals of the month

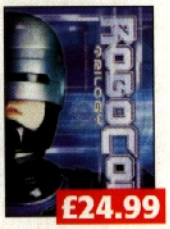
GAMEBOY ADVANCE

www.gamer.uk.com

Truly one of the most enjoyable ways to twiddle your thumbs for an hour or two, the Gameboy Advance boasts 32-bits worth of pure gaming power. The handheld console features top of the range graphics and comes in four funky colours. This cracking deal, courtesy of Gamer.uk.com even lets you pike out of paying for the postage and packing.

ROBOCOP TRILOGY

www.dvd.co.uk



Three DVDs for less than 25 quid sounds like a superb deal to us, and even though the third movie in the series may be a right steamer, the first two Robocop films are true classics. This box set comes with a host of features including a 'making of' documentary and a previously unreleased director's cut of Robocop complete with extra violence so you can see everyone's favourite cyber cop kicking even more lumps out of villainous scum.

CASIO WQV-3

www.firebox.com

A watch that even James Bond would be chuffed to wear around his wrist, the Casio WQV-3 doubles up as a colour camera. The timepiece can store up to 80 images on a 1Mb built-in Flash memory which can then be transferred to your PC for editing before being shared on the Web or via email.

Many People, One World, **One Host.**

Web Hosting

Dedicated Servers

eCommerce

Domain Name Registration

SHARED HOSTING.
Home. 100Mb £60pa
Commerce.
200Mb: ASP, SSL
£18pm or £180pa
Reseller.
Host Unlimited Domains
ASP, SSL
£45pm or £450pa
Enterprise.
Mirrored, load-balanced
Servers1000Mb
£120pm or £1,200pa

Features
Microsoft Windows 2000/NT based Web Services running IIS
Web Based Control Panel
Microsoft FrontPage 2002 Server Extensions
FREE Domain Name Registration or Transfer
30 Day Money Back Guarantee
FREE dial-up access
Telephone/EMail Technical Support

DEDICATED HOSTING.
Gold
600Mhz, 128Mb, 10Gb Drive
£200pm or £2,000pa
Diamond
700 Mhz, 256Mb, 2x9Gb SCSI
£300pm or £3,000pa
Platinum
850 Mhz, 512Mb, 2x18Gb SCSI
£400pm or £4,000pa

Features
Microsoft Windows 2000 Server Powered
Same day set-up
No Minimum Contract
No Set-up fee
Secure InterHouse based 100mb switched network
24hr telephone/email support
Full Administrator Level access
Host an UNLIMITED number of web sites
Web-based Control Panel
Domain Names from £5pa

All Trademarks acknowledged.
All prices exclude VAT.

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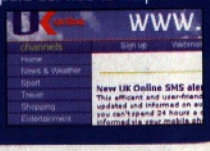
Microsoft CERTIFIED Partner

WIN A DEDICATED SERVER ENTER ON-LINE

→ Lindy (**www.lindy.co.uk**) has released a new Internet keyboard, designed to make Net access even easier. The board boasts 19 programmable Hotkeys and iKey works software for instant access to the Web and email applications and easy control of your browser. The new device costs £12.99.

→ Telly favourite Charlie Dimmock has emailed Net users encouraging them to help solve the world's water problem. The presenter of BBC's Ground Force, famed for her love of water features, wants people to sign an online petition at **www.wateraid.org.uk** urging the government to help solve global water and sanitation crises.

→ Net users can keep up with all the latest gossip from mobile phone following the launch of a new SMS service from UK Online (**www.ukonline.net**). The ISP has introduced the pre-paid service to help users stay up to date with the latest news, entertainment and sports news.



It's My Party

AND IT'S GOING TO INFECT YOUR PC BECAUSE IT BLOODY WELL WANTS TO!

A UNIQUE NEW email worm has been wreaking havoc on the Net by disguising itself as a Web address full of party snaps.

The 'My Party' virus is believed to be the first to use the **.com** extension in order to fool recipients into opening it. The email contains the subject line "New photos from my party" and directs users to a Yahoo hosted site.

However, if opened, the worm sends a copy of itself to everyone in the Windows address book, which is used by both Outlook Express and Outlook.

"This worm uses cunning social engineering to spread itself," said Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant for Sophos Anti-Virus (**www.sophos.com**). "My Party dupes users into thinking they'll see exciting snaps of frolicking partygoers. Instead of blushing over embarrassing photos, infected users will be red-faced about forwarding malicious code to their friends, colleagues and customers."

While My Party has spread throughout the world, anti-virus experts say the number of infections is low compared to bugs such as BadTrans, currently the most widespread virus.

Hall of shame

Top five viruses	% of reports
BadTrans-B	61.1%
MyParty -A	4.3%
Magistr-B	3.6%
Sircam-A	2.9%
Nimda-A	2.3%

Chart based on the most frequently reported viruses to Sophos (www.sophos.com) in January 2002.

Practical internet™
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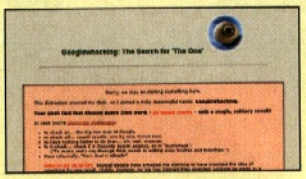
Ultimate Web timewaster

GOOGLE-BASED GAME SENDS NERDS CRAZY



Whacky races: can you find a Googlewhack?

ALONG WITH SHOOT 'em ups, the Web is the best waste of the working day ever invented, and a new game called Googlewhacking threatens to distract even the most diligent desk jockey.

The rules of the game, invented by US programmer Gary Stock, are simple. Using the ubiquitous Google search engine (**www.google.com** in case you're reading this on Neptune) you have to enter a two word search query in quote marks that yields only one result – you're looking for the magic Google screen proclaiming "Result 1-1". Once you've found that perfect Googlewhack, post your search phrase for scrutiny at **www.unblinking.com/heh/googlewhack.htm**. But there are caveats. One, the words in your search query, or 'googlefactor' must be verified by the Dictionary.com Web site, so you can't invent words. Second, you're encouraged to post a link to your search phrase at the Googlewhack site, ensuring that in future it will return two results.

Our favourite Googlewhacks

Creepily, some of these phrases nicely describe our new editor… (**Not so sure about that – Ed**)

Maladroit wheezer
Banana circumcision
Vegan cowcatcher
Capricious pulper

If you crack the Googlewhack game, email pi@paragon.co.uk

Apple beefs up the Mac

NEW POWER MAC G4 FINALLY CRACKS THE 1GHZ MARK

APPLE HAS RELEASED its fastest Mac ever and the company's first ever machine to feature a processor running in excess of 1GHz.

The Dual 1GHz Power Mac G4 has been designed to give the Mac the edge over the Pentium P4 in terms of processor power and boasts a range of features designed to speed up the creation of digital art Web media.

The new G4 comes with dual 1GHz PowerPC G4 processors along with the NVIDIA GeForce 4 graphics card and a DVD/CD burning SuperDrive. Apple claims the new machine can run professional applications, such as Photoshop, up to 72 percent faster than a 2GHz Pentium 4-based PC.

"The new dual 1GHz Power Mac G4 with NVIDIA GeForce4 graphics is the fastest Mac ever and the fastest personal computer ever for creative professionals", said Philip Schiller, senior vice president of Worldwide Product Marketing. "This is the first Mac to break the 1GHz barrier and the first computer in the world to feature a NVIDIA GeForce4 graphics card".

Net Watch

INTERNET FREEDOM'S **CHRIS ELLISON** CASTS A CRITICAL EYE OVER THE LATEST EVENTS IN CYBERSPACE

MOST PEOPLE WILL remember last year as the time that the dot com bubble finally burst. The information-driven New Economy was supposed to have been exposed as a fraud. It is certainly the case that the optimism of the 'dot com' boom was misplaced. As Cellan-Jones puts it in 'Dot.bomb: The Rise and Fall of Dotcom Britain', when "journalists…starting writing in glowing terms [about lastminute.com, it] still had a smaller turnover than the average petrol station". But the 'dot com boom' was not economically driven. It was financially driven. Even in the US, which had a strong belief in the technology-led economic miracle, the average rate of real economic growth during the 1990s was about 3.6%. This compares unfavourably with the 1980s (in which it was 4%) and the 1970s (in which it was 4.7%).

The truth is, the 'dot com boom' never really happened. In reality the 1990s saw instead a massive expansion of credit, particularly in the area of speculative investment. Venture capitalists would gamble money on new businesses in the hope that enough would succeed for them to get a return.

Since the middle of 2000, many Internet businesses have collapsed and share prices have fallen. Over 10% of venture capitalist investments have had to be written off. 2001 soon became known as the year of the 'dot com bust'. But, in fact, it is quite normal for venture capitalists to write off some 30% of their investments. All the economic gloom is as unjustified as the New Economy hype. Just as the dot com boom had no real economic basis, neither does the dot com bust. In reality, dot coms are actually doing disproportionately better than many other non-Internet start-ups.

It would seem that whole dot com boom-bust phenomenon tells us far more about people's hopes and fears for technology, than it does about the real potential of the Internet.

Internet Freedom can be contacted on campaign@netfreedom.org. The campaign's Web site is at www.netfreedom.org

13 Editing AutoComplete

What happens if you accidentally type a Web address incorrectly? For example, if you type in 'www.paragoon.co.uk', every time you start typing 'paragon' in the future, it will pop up a list with the wrong address included. You don't have to scroll past the wrong address; you can simply get rid of it. Use your cursor keys to select the incorrect entry and then press Delete to remove it.

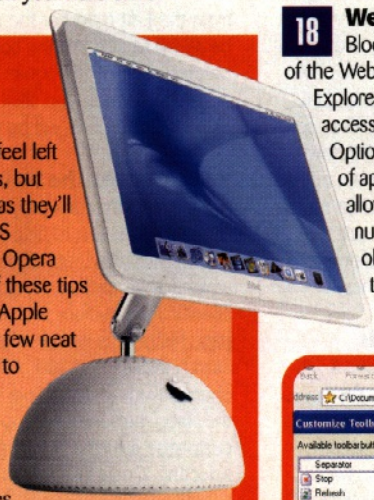
14 Customise IE's privacy settings

Cookies are small files used by sites to store personal data and monitor your visits. The most pernicious are 'third-party' cookies, which track your surfing for the benefit of advertisers. Fortunately, the 'Privacy' section of IE's 'Internet Options' lets you to decide which cookie to leave on your PC, and the sites allowed to leave them. 'Medium' provides a decent level of security.

15 Use Privacy Reporting

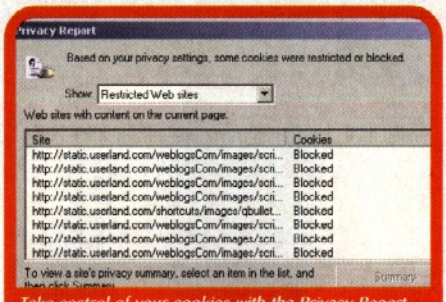
One of IE6's innovations is the 'Privacy Report' facility, found on the 'View' menu, which offers an outline of a site's privacy policy and shows if IE has accepted or blocked any cookies during your visit to the site. Not many smaller sites support this feature yet, but you're likely to find it working on larger ones, especially those affiliated to Microsoft. By being able to see exactly what they do with your personal data, it makes it easy to decide whether to block them from leaving cookies on your hard drive.

Mac Attack



MAC USERS OFTEN feel left out of surveys like this, but they really shouldn't; as they'll find that in the Mac OS versions of Netscape, Opera and IE, the majority of these tips still apply. In fact, IE's Apple incarnation includes a few neat tricks that don't apply to the Windows version, such as a tabbed sidebar. Macs have also supported customisable interfaces for many years, thanks to programs such as Kaleidoscope (**www.kaleidoscope.net**), while the Sherlock application (**www.apple.com/sherlock**) combines the ability to dig out information from your hard drive with dozens of online search engines and reference sources.

You'll also find plenty of competition from Mac-specific browsers. iCab (**www.icab.de**) has long been the unsung hero of the second division, a fast, uncluttered browser with a loyal following. And with the release of MacOS X, the old Omniweb browser (**www.omnigroup.com/applications/omniweb**) has received a new lease of life, and looks set to compete with the big browser vendors while they fine-tune their own OS X-compatible versions.



Take control of your cookies with the Privacy Report

16 Get cookie alerts

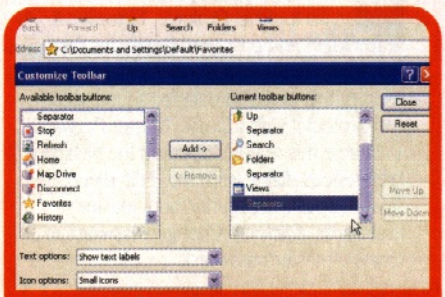
When Internet Explorer decides to block cookies a little icon resembling a 'no entry' sign will appear in the right-hand section of the status bar at the bottom of the browser window. Click this to summon the Privacy Report screen, which offers details of the blocked cookies. Now adjust your settings to create an exception for that particular site, or leave things as they are.

17 Protect yourself from viruses

Guard against these with IE's Security Zones, reached by selecting 'Security' from the Internet Options menu, or by clicking the 'Internet' globe at the bottom right of the status bar. This allows you to define security rules for your local Intranet, and create lists of trusted and untrusted sites, which can then have different thresholds of trust regarding what is downloaded and which scripts are run through your browser.

18 Weed out unsuitable sites

Block access to the less wholesome parts of the Web or a specific range of sites with Explorer's Content Advisor. This feature, accessed through the 'Content' tab of Internet Options, provides a password-protected list of approved and disapproved sites. It also allows you to set acceptable levels of nudity, bad language, and other objectionable content. Be careful, though, this feature uses very old technology and can be very unreliable.



Customising toolbars helps you work faster and smarter

19 Customize icons on the toolbar

ISPs and third-party software vendors love placing icons on your toolbars, but this can get annoying. Fortunately, there's a simple way to hone down the number of buttons to choose from, which is especially useful if you're working on a limited screen space. Just right-click on the main toolbar and select 'Customize': you can then use the menu that appears to move these icons on and off the toolbar .

20 Lock your toolbars

Enabling all of IE's toolbars limits the space devoted to the actual pages. It's easy to create more space: right-click on any toolbar, ensuring that there isn't a tick next to 'Lock the Toolbars'. Now drag and drop each toolbar by clicking on the vertical bar on its left-hand side, so that two or more can occupy the same portion of the screen.

21 Treat Favorites like files

There's a powerful file manager built into IE's browser interface. Just enter the location of your Favorites folder into the Address bar: it's usually 'C:\Windows\Favorites', but if you're using Windows XP, it's 'C:\Documents and Settings' and your login name. You'll see your bookmarks appear as shortcuts to Web pages: these can be renamed and sorted into folders like regular files.

Streamlining IE's Favorites menu makes life easier

22 The personalised Favorites menu

IE lets you streamline the 'Favorites' menu to show just the most recently accessed pages and newest additions. Select 'Enable Personalised Favorites Menu' from the Advanced section of Internet Options, and you'll notice the difference – retrieve the full list by clicking on the arrow at the bottom of the menu.

23 Save Web graphics with one click

One of IE's best new features is the pop-up Image Toolbar. Bring this up by leaving your pointer over a large image: you'll see four icons in the top-left corner, allowing you to save, print or email the image, or open the Pictures folder.

24 One-click acccess to Web sites

The Links Bar is a great way to provide quick access to the sites you really do want to visit. Clean it up by using the right-click menu to delete the buttons you don't want, and fill it up with good stuff by dragging links from Web pages, the Address Bar, the Favorites menu, or anywhere on your PC. You can even place folders on the Links bar, and create a pop-up menu for easy access to more of your bookmarks.

25 Use Bookmarklets

You can also add 'bookmarklets' to the Links Bar. These are small snippets of JavaScript that can perform all manner of useful functions. You'll find a wide selection of these at **www.bookmarklets.com**, including calendars, conversion calculators, and plenty of useful tools for Web designers and programmers. Other bookmarklets hook into Web-based reference sources such as dictionaries and thesauruses.

26 Save pages to your hard drive

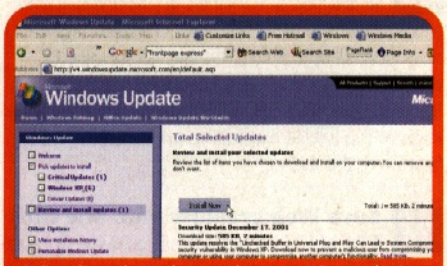
When you save a Web page in IE, by selecting 'Save As...' from the File menu, it won't just save the HTML. Instead, it fetches all the related graphical elements that form the page, so that when you click on the saved page, everything's intact, even if you're offline. Windows even knows that the two elements are related and treats them as a single item, so you can move pages around your PC without having to copy across the graphics separately.

27 Store favourite pages on your PC

IE can be used as an offline browser, retrieving your favourite pages – or even entire sites – for storage on your hard drive. The simplest way to enable this is to add a page to your Favorites list, select 'Make available offline', then click on 'Customize' to choose how much of the site you want to store offline. (Be careful: go back more than a few levels, and you may find your hard drive full in no time at all!)

28 Synchronise offline content

For every static Web site, there are dozens that are updated regularly, which makes using offline versions painfully complicated if you synchronise things by hand. Fortunately, IE gives you plenty of options to keep stored pages fresh. You can update specific pages, synchronise all offline content in one fell swoop, or even set a time for regular scheduled updates, so that while you're sleeping, IE will go online and grab everything that's new!



Did you know that Explorer can keep your PC up to date?

29 Update your PC software

Modern versions of Windows use a browser-based tool to provide security updates and upgraded features for your PC. Simply select 'Windows Update' from the 'Start Menu' or IE's Tools menu, and you'll be taken to Microsoft's update site. Download the ActiveX control, and you can scan your PC for critical and optional updates, check what's available for download, and install what's needed. You can even set Windows Update to launch automatically whenever an important update becomes available.

30 Integration with email

We've already shown you how to email URLs and entire pages to friends – you can also click on hyperlinked email addresses within Web pages to fire up a new email message to that address, and configure Outlook Express to view HTML-formatted mail and launch hyperlinks in a browser window. You can even have some of this integration if you use a program like Eudora: just make sure that it's set as the default mailer in the 'Programs' menu of IE's Internet Options.

Netscape 6

31 Create different profiles

Netscape allows you to create browser profiles for different users, each with their own set of cookies, bookmarks and personal data. To set this up, select the 'Manage Profiles' icon (under Netscape when you use the Windows Start menu), and you'll be able to create, edit and rename profiles. Once you've set up more than one profile, launching Netscape will take you directly to the Profile Manager, allowing you to select a profile before it launches.

32 Protect your passwords

Like Internet Explorer, Netscape 6 allows login and password details for Web sites to be saved. Unlike IE, Netscape lets you encrypt this personal data for added security, and protect it with a single 'Master Password'. To enable this feature, open up the Netscape Preferences dialog from the 'Edit' menu, then select 'Privacy & Security' and 'Master Passwords'. Click on 'Change Password' to create a master password.

33 Personalised form filling

By default, Netscape is configured to remember the values that you submit when filling out online forms, so that they can be retrieved later. You can supplement this automated task by supplying your own personal data: select 'Privacy & Security' from the Preferences dialog, then select 'Forms' and 'View Stored Form Data'. (Again, this information is protected by your profile's master password.) Once this is in place, to auto-complete a form, just select 'Prefill Form' from the Edit menu or the right-click menu. You'll be asked to confirm the specific data to be entered – you can choose to skip this step if you want – and when you click on 'OK', all the elements you need will be put in place.

34 Master the Netscape Sidebar

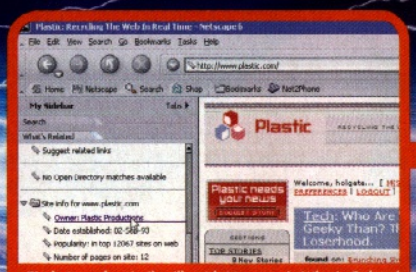
This provides easy access to all manner of useful information to help you as you surf. Enable it from the 'View' menu. You'll see a set of tabs, which, when clicked, hook you up to browser-specific information, such as your bookmarks and page history, as well as offering news headlines, a search facility, and your AIM buddy list. You can choose from the most popular tabs by clicking on the 'Tabs' button at the top of the Sidebar, and customise it further by right-clicking on a tab and selecting 'Customize My Sidebar'.

35 Make cheap phone calls

Want to use the phone and surf at the same time, but only have the one phone line? Want to talk to people in other countries, but hate inflated international call charges? Click on the Net2Phone button on the Netscape links toolbar, and you may find a solution. The Netscape plugin allows you to make calls at a reasonable per-minute rate across the country and around the world. And because Net2Phone makes calls to normal phone lines, the person at the other end doesn't have to be glued to a PC!

36 Surf To Related Sites

Like IE, Netscape uses a version of the Alexa plugin to help you find sites related to the pages you're currently browsing. However, unlike


Find sites of a similar ilk with Netscape's What's Related

Netscape can translate foreign language sites for you

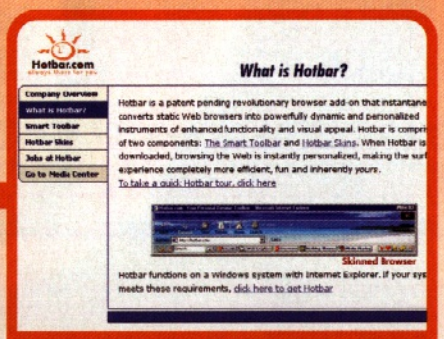
Cutsomise your browser by shedding your skin

WE'VE SAID IT before: battleship grey is fine if you're a battleship, but if your video card can handle a few million colours, why not take full advantage of them and brighten up your window on the Web?

Thankfully, software manufacturers are now starting to agree with us, and it's easier than ever to download and design customised 'skins' for your browser interface, then put them online for others to use.

NeoPlanet (**www.neoplanet.com**) was the first browser company to emphasise the possibilities of 'skinning', by encouraging its users to create and share their own browser themes. Now, all the main browsers have similar capabilities, even if they're not always well publicised.

The Hotbar plug-in (**www.hotbar.com**) lets you alter IE's appearance, as does the theme support provided with Windows XP and other third-party applications such as WindowBlinds (**www.windowblinds.net**). The 'customisible chrome' of Netscape and Mozilla (**www.themes.org/skins/mozilla**) allows for even more radical experiments with the layout of the browser interface. And with the release of version 6.0 of Opera, that browser too supports downloadable and custom-built themes and buttons.


Alter the appearance of your Web browser with Hotbar

"NETSCAPE'S NET2PHONE LETS YOU MAKE CHEAPER NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CALLS"

IE's static search, Netscape's version provides a constantly updated set of links as you move from site to site, together with site information and other useful reference data. This service works from the Netscape Sidebar, but it isn't enabled by default. To set it up, make sure the Sidebar is running, click on the 'Tabs' button, and select 'What's Related' from the menu. The tab will then appear on the Sidebar.

37 Using directory enquiries

If you haven't been able to track down a long-lost mate through FriendsReunited, then you can always try Netscape's built-in People Search, which feeds into a set of online directories. Just go to the Search menu and select 'People Finder'. The Netscape People Finder page opens, prompting you to type in the name and general address details for the person you want to find. Then select 'Find Phone Number, Street Address, or Email Address' and click Search. Alternatively, you can run a Reverse Search if you know the person's street address, phone number, or email address and nothing else.

38 Language translation

To get a translation of a Web page, click on the 'View' menu and select 'Translate' to access the Gist-In-Time Web translation service. The URL of the page you've come from should appear in the 'Enter A URL' field. From the pull-down menus, select the language in which that page is written and then choose the language into which you'd like it to be translated. Then click on the 'Gist' button: the translated page should quickly appear in your browser. If you click through to a subsequent page, you'll find that Gist has translated that page, too, and so on.

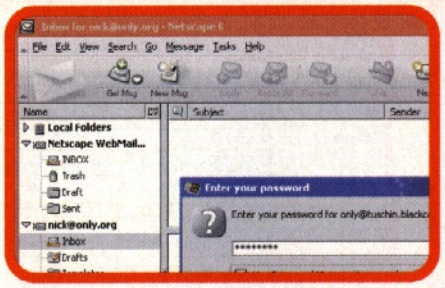
39 Run AOL Instant Messenger

Ever since AOL snaffled up Netscape, it has bundled its own instant messenger when you download the browser. Netscape 6 provides even tighter integration between browser and messaging client, by allowing you to run AIM from the Sidebar. If you already have an AIM screen name and buddy list, getting online is simple: just call up the Sidebar, ensure that the 'Buddies' tab is enabled, and click on it to open the AIM dialog box. Enter your screen name and password, and you'll be able to sign in and retrieve details of your buddy list.

40 Setup Email with Netscape Messenger

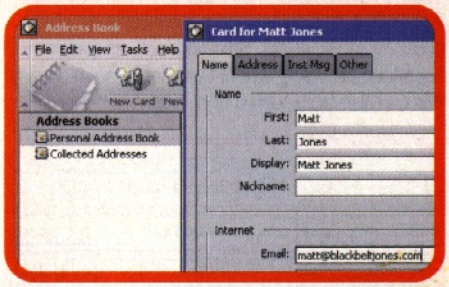
1 Set up a Netscape ID

Launch Netscape and click on the envelope icon in the bottom-left of your browser window. You'll be asked if you want to create a Netscape WebMail account. For this you need to register an ID with Netscape.



2 Composing messages

To create a new email message, just click 'New Message' from the main toolbar in Messenger. You can then fetch contact information from your Address book, adjust the formatting, run a spell-check or add attachments.



3 Managing your contacts

Netscape's Address Book is a powerful, contacts manager: it saves addresses and personal information from emails, and from your AIM buddy list. It also allows you to create 'business cards' that you can attach to your messages.

Opera

41 Search direct from your browser

Like IE and Netscape, Opera also has a built-in searching facility. Opera's integrated search tool can be accessed from the Search bar section of the main toolbar and gives you direct access to online search engines, such as the almighty Google. You can also use this feature to look up stock quotes and find music and video files.

42 Use mouse 'gestures'

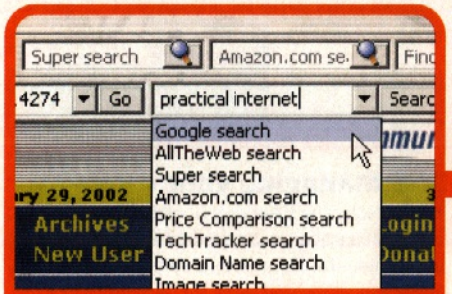
If you spend as much time on your PC playing games as you do surfing the Web, you'll be familiar with using the mouse to move from place to place. Now, Opera applies the Quake principle to the Web browser with its 'gesture commands'. These are small, quick mouse movements which perform the most frequently-used browser commands. To get these working, you hold down the right-hand button of your mouse, before executing the command. For instance, move the mouse to the left to go to the previous page in your browser history, or move it to the right to move forward one page.

43 Zoom in and out of pages

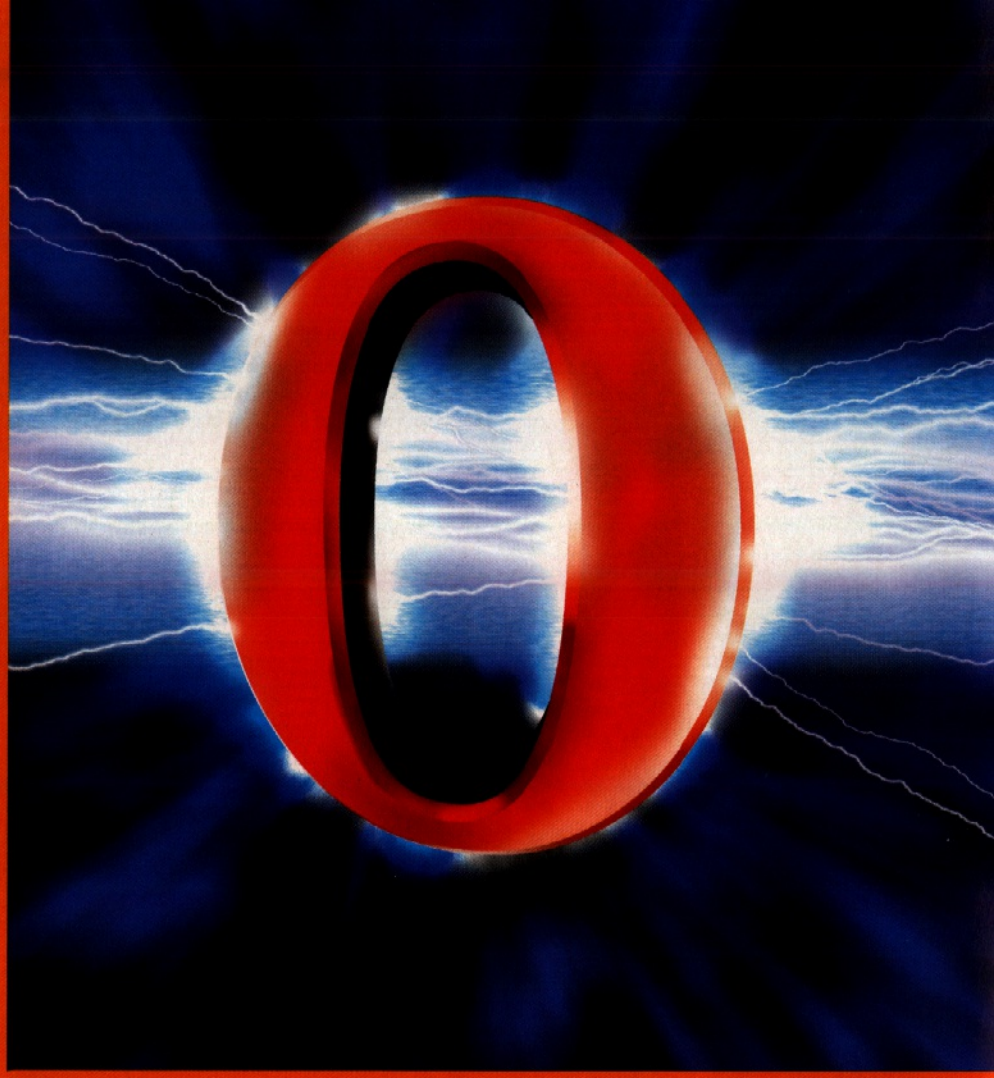
Opera has a set of features designed specifically to assist those with accessability needs, and one of these is the ability to zoom in and out of pages that would otherwise be unreadable. The simplest way to adjust the settings is with the drop-down menu on each browser window in Opera, which offers pre-defined settings ranging from 20 percent to 100 percent of the original, and also allows you to enter your own preferred percentage. You can also use the numbers on the numeric keypad to switch to different zoom levels.

44 Start browsing where you left off

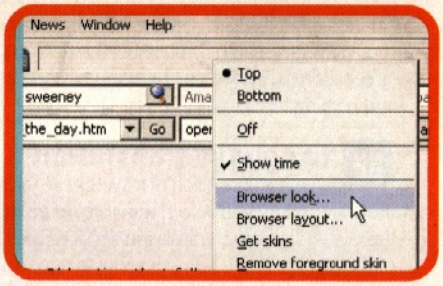
One annoying aspect of both Netscape and Internet Explorer is that it's easy to forget which pages you were browsing the last time you were online – you have to dig out the URLs from the page history, or remember to bookmark them for later retrieval. And if your browser crashes, you're left relying on memory. Opera makes life easier, by remembering the pages you leave open when you quit the browser, so that they're there waiting for you next time you fire up your browser. To enable this feature, just go to the Preferences menu by pressing Alt+P, select 'Start and exit', and select 'Continue browsing where I was last time'. Naturally, this can also be disabled from here.



Opera provides instant access to Web searching resources

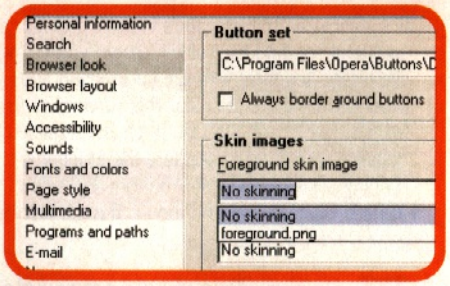


45 Customising the look and feel of Opera



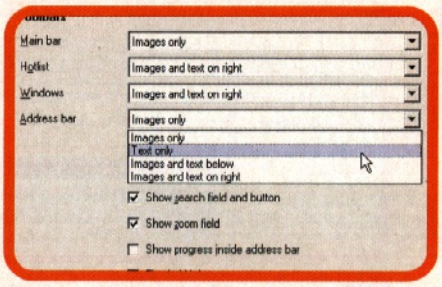
1 Start customising Opera

To alter the look and feel of the Opera interface, right-click on any of the toolbars. You can choose where to place each toolbar, adjust skin features, and access 'Preferences' for further fine-tuning.



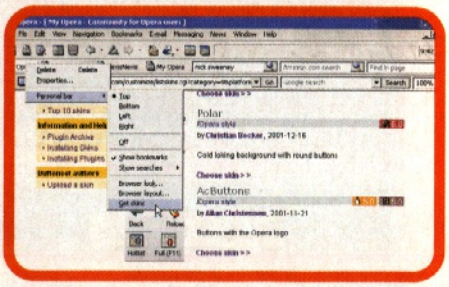
2 Take a new look

The 'Browser look' menu lets you define the size and design of the button toolbar, and apply foreground and background 'skins' to the other toolbars. Pick a button configuration from the list provided to gain more screen space.



3 Laying things out

The 'Browser layout' menu allows you to select which elements of toolbars to use – you can choose from text labels, icons or a mixture of both. You can also choose whether or not to include the search and zoom fields on each window.



4 Get a skin transplant

Fetch skins by right-clicking on any toolbar to call up the customisation menu. If you're online, hit 'Get skins', and you'll be taken to Opera's customisation page (**www.opera.com/customize**), where you can download the themes you like.

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TISCALI

46 Search the Web with Hotclick

An innovation in Opera not shared by other browsers is its 'hotclick' feature, which lets you copy, translate, look up, and search the Web for text found in a Web page. Just highlight a word or phrase, call up the right-click menu, and you'll see a set of options that allows you to copy the selected text, or use it as the query term in an array of search engines and reference sites, including a dictionary, encyclopaedia, and Opera's own support directory.

47 Integrate with ICQ

If you're not interested in all the frills and features of modern instant messengers, then you can use Opera's contact list instead: it contains a built-in messaging client which allows you to send and receive messages using the ICQ protocol. (Sadly, other protocols aren't yet supported.) Just click on the 'Messaging' menu within Opera, select 'New account', and enter your ICQ number and password. Once you're logged into the service, you can add contacts to your list if you know their ICQ numbers, and run searches in the member directory for others.

48 Block pop-up windows, and more

Opera is the only one of the main three browsers that allows users to disable pop-up windows, one of the biggest annoyances for anyone surfing the Web. To enable this feature, just press the F12 shortcut key and select 'Refuse pop-up windows' from the menu that appears. This menu also lets you fine-tune other browser settings, to turn off JavaScript, cookies or plug-ins, and allows you to get into sites that don't like the Opera user agent string by changing it to masquerade as either Netscape or Internet Explorer.

49 Toggle graphics for speedy surfing

A quick and useful keyboard shortcut that can dramatically speed up your surfing in Opera is the 'G' key. This toggles between three different graphics modes: show all images, show no images, and show only previously shown images. This can be particularly useful if you're not bothered about waiting for a graphics-rich page to load. You can also access these modes by clicking on the TV-shaped icon, second from the left on the browser toolbar. For even sleeker browsing, the icon to the right allows you to toggle between the page author's stylesheet, and a user-defined one which can exclude the elements that make sites slow to load.

50 Create HTML Presentations

Opera's full-screen mode, activated by pressing the F11 shortcut key, is designed to make it easy to create HTML-based presentations with all the panache of PowerPoint and none of the infuriating overheads. By using cascading style sheets, you can split a Web page into slides, use hyperlinks and other Web technologies, and publish your presentations online. You'll need to know a little about HTML to get things working properly, but it's relatively painless, when compared to traditional presentation tools: there's also an online tutorial at **www.opera.com/support/operashow** which should be able to point you in the right direction.

Think different with these Web browsing alternatives

1 MSN Explorer

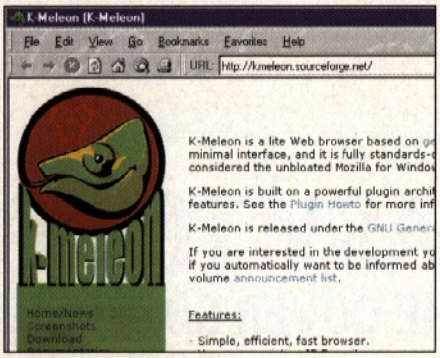
explorer.msn.com

Microsoft's answer to the jack-of-all-trades AOL browser, MSN Explorer combines the Web browsing capacity of IE with email, multimedia access and instant messaging in a single program. Useful for those who like the simple life.

2 Mozilla

www.mozilla.org

Mozilla is Netscape's rebellious cousin, created in collaboration with independent developers, whose best ideas are folded back into the main Netscape browser. It lacks some of the more commercial features, such as inline translation and shopping toolbars, but has other 'bleeding-edge' innovations, such as tabbed windows, built-in IRC chat, and access to online maps. Power users will love it: check out the community at **www.mozillazine.org** for details.



3 3. K-Meleon

kmeleon.sourceforge.net

K-Meleon is built for speed, not frills: it uses the Gecko rendering engine that powers Netscape 6 and Mozilla, but with only the most essential features. Good for minimalists.

4 OffByOne Browser

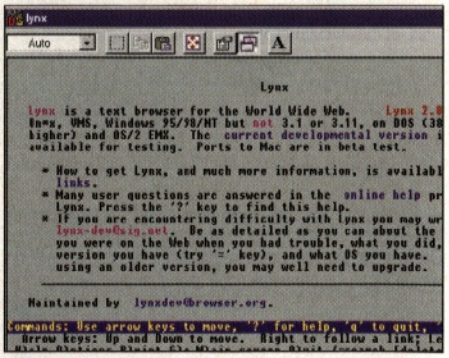
www.offbyone.com

It may be a side-project for its developers, and it's not as pretty as its bigger cousins, but OffByOne is fast, feature-rich, handles the most recent HTML standards, and comes in a package small enough to fit on a floppy disk.

5 NeoPlanet

www.neoplanet.com/site/products/browser.html

NeoPlanet's main attraction is that it's 'skinnable', which means you can customise the interface to your heart's content. Its beauty isn't just skin deep, though; it combines a buddy list, email client and download management software.



6 Lynx

lynx.browser.org

It's hard to see the point of a text-only browser: that is, until you're on a bad dialup line and just need the words, fast. In situations like these, when you really couldn't care less about graphics, Lynx is well worth having around.

Do you know a Web browsing secret? If so, email your trick to pi@paragon.co.uk and we'll print the best of the bunch.

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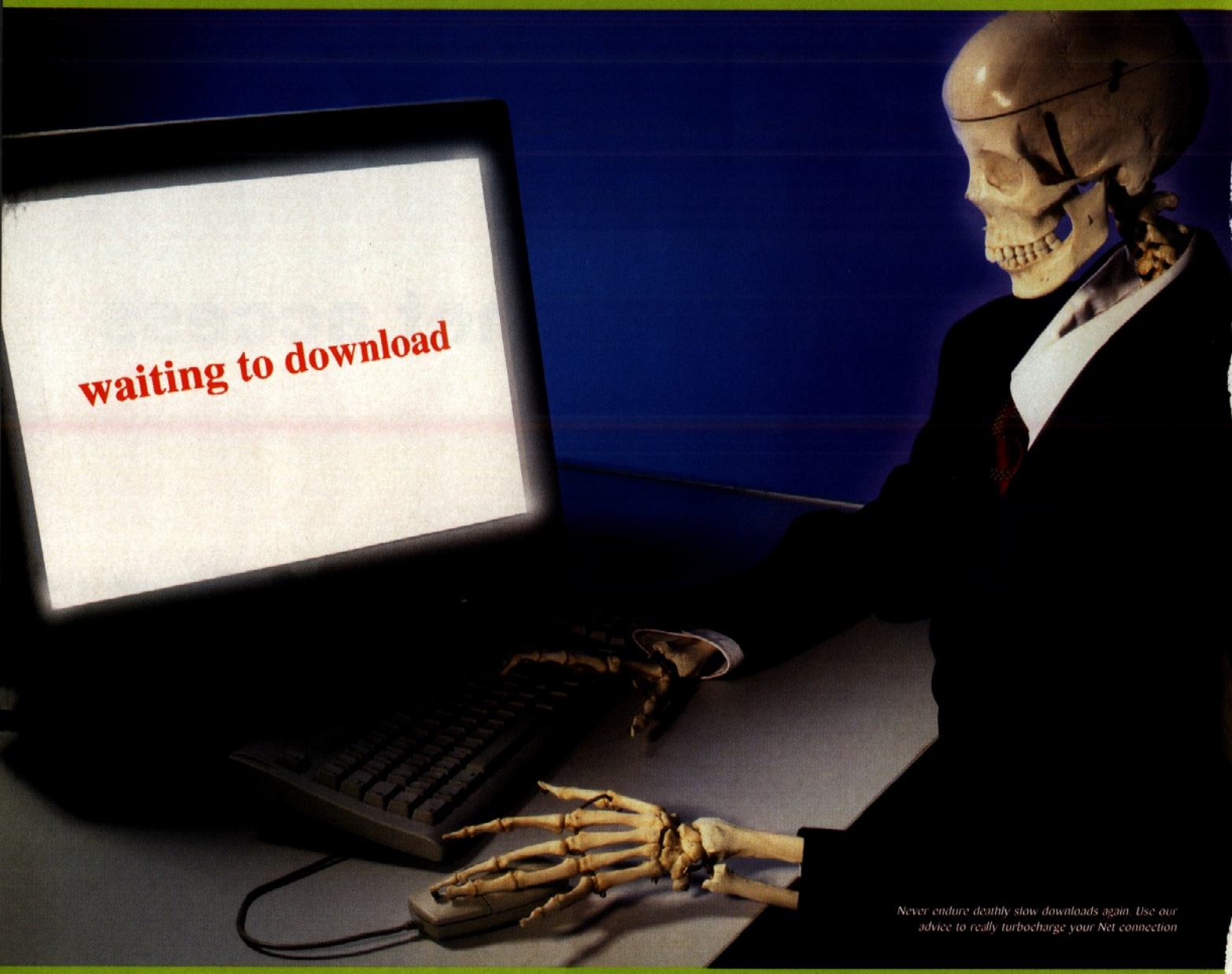


Never endure deathly slow downloads again. Use our advice to really turbocharge your Net connection

Speed up your downloads

ON THE CD

FED UP WITH DAWDLING DOWNLOADS? LET **JAMES THORNTON** SHOW YOU HOW TO INJECT A MUCH-NEEDED BURST OF SPEED INTO PROCEEDINGS

Getting your paws on the latest music, games or movies has always been one of the best reasons to get an Internet connection. Nearly every Net user must have been gripped by that initial feeling of excitement when coming across an MP3 of a long-forgotten tune or a handy piece of freeware on the Web. More often than not, though, this excitement turns into frustration, which in turn then gives way to downright boredom when you realise it's going to take the best part of an afternoon just to download your new discovery. You'll probably then find yourself thinking 'sod this for a laugh' and pulling the plug on the whole idea.

Why should you have to put up with such lolloping download speeds? The answer is that you don't. There are ways and means of giving your connection a kick up the backside so you can grab downloads quicker than ever before.

For starters, there are aspects of your PC's setup that you can doctor in order to get the maximum download performance from your modem. A new PC is rarely configured for bandwidth-intensive Net usage, so simply by fiddling around a bit with your settings, you can start to make a difference. If you don't fancy doing this yourself, we'll explain how to use the latest software to do the job for you.

We also run through how you can smarten up the way you download stuff from the Net by using one of the many excellent download management utilities available, some of the best of which we've included on this month's CD. Plus, we give you pointers on other methods you could adopt to spare yourself from download hell.

Once you've put everything into practice, you should be pleasantly surprised with the change in download speed, meaning you'll be free to go and plunder whatever you want from the Net.

Tweak your modem settings

No matter what sort of modem you're using, you can pretty much guarantee it isn't performing to its maximum downloading potential, due to your computer's setup. If, for example, you're using a 56K modem, you'd be wrong to think that it means every file you download from the Net will be sucked through the wires at a rate of 56Kb a second. Why? Because your PC isn't configured to operate at its best with a modem, you'll find that your connection will never transfer files at full pelt.

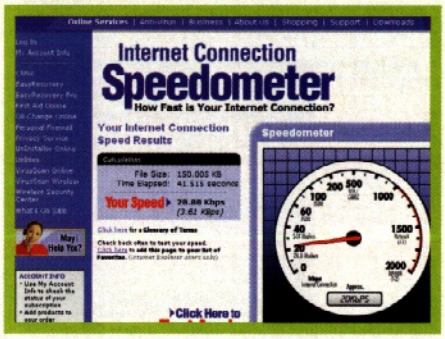
Before you start mucking around with your connection settings, it's useful to find out exactly how fast your modem is currently ticking so you can then accurately gauge the difference after making changes. Windows 95 and 98 users can do this by double-clicking on the connectivity icon in the system tray (normally next to the PC clock). Your connection speed will be listed inside the pop-up window in bits per second. Alternatively, you could try McAfee's Internet Connection 'Speedometer' at **www.mcafee.com/myapps/default.asp#free**.

One way of instantly improving your download speed from within Windows is by adjusting your modem transfer rate. You can do this by selecting 'Settings' from the Start menu and opening the 'Control Panel'. Double-click on the 'Modems' icon and click on the name of the modem you wish to adjust. Click the 'Properties' button and choose the modem transfer speed from the 'Maximum speed' drop-down menu. This will optimise the maximum pace at which your connection can run, giving you a good head start before tweaking the other settings.

TO GET FILE TRANSFERS RUNNING AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, YOU'LL NEED TO 'MAX' OUT YOUR MTU

Maxing your MTU

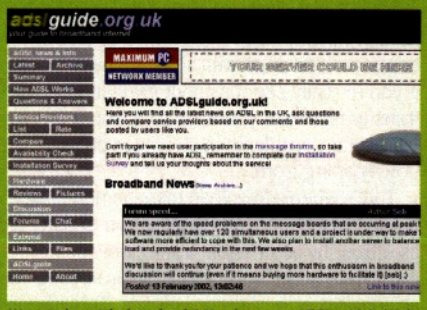
Most of the other things you can do to your PC to bolster your download rates involve tinkering with the settings in the Registry. To get those file transfers running as quickly as possible, you need to max out your MTU. While this term may sound like something a Formula One racing driver does, MTU actually stands for Maximum Transmission Unit and refers to the largest size of data packet that can be transmitted either to or from your modem. Therefore, raising the MaxMTU can help you achieve more efficient downloads. Although it's not recommended to do this manually, as you could stuff up your entire system, there are plenty of programs that will safely change these options for you.



*See how many revs your modem chalks up with McAfee's handy 'Speedometer' at **www.mcafee.com/myapps/default.asp#free***

Internet Turbo 2001 claims to boost your data transfer rates by an incredible 200-300 per cent. It works by optimising your Net connection in real-time to prevent fragmentation of transfers. It includes the ability to fix the MaxMTU and also includes a registry backup utility. We've included a trial version of the software on this month's cover disc so that you can see for yourself exactly how effective this is.

Another useful suite of utilities is SpeedNet 5 (also on this month's cover disc), which is designed to make your whole download experience as slick as possible. The program's built-in download accelerator can be used to double or even triple your existing download speeds by automatically monkeying around with your connection settings without requiring you to get your hands dirty. What's more, if you find that SpeedNet's settings haven't improved your download times, you can reset to the default setup with a single click.



Want truly quick downloads? Head over to ADSLguide's Web site and get the lowdown on broadband Net access

It needn't be hell with ADSL

WE COULDN'T LEAVE a feature on downloading without mentioning the 'A' word. Of course, for all the tweaking and software assistance you use there's a limit to the download speeds a 56Kpbs modem can muster. If you really want to thrust your downloading speed forward significantly, then you'll need to equip yourself with a broadband connection.

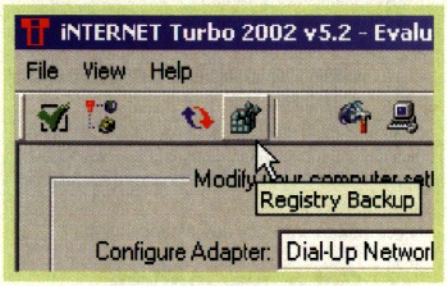
Europe Online can bring ADSL to countryfolk

ADSL is now available in many urban areas of the UK and prices are now starting to drop due to the launch of DIY kits. This means that as long as you've got an ADSL modem, you needn't fork out for installation by an approved BT engineer. Hence, if downloading files from the Internet is part of your daily routine, it's worth thinking about paying the £40 or so a month to get a super-quick digital connection.

If you live in a rural area, then fret not, because you can now get broadband Net through satellite services such as Europe Online (**www.europeonline.com**).

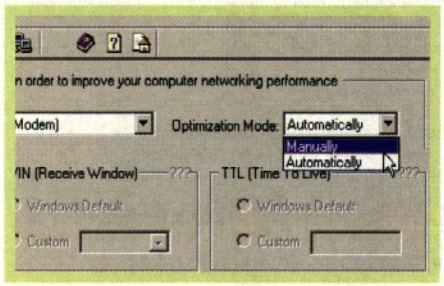
Further details on ADSL services are available from sites such as the ADSL Guide (**www.adslguide.org.uk**), ADSLuk (**www.adsluk.org.uk**) or Broadband News UK (**www.broadband-news.co.uk**). Alternatively, check out our list of broadband ISPs on pages 146-151.

Get your downloads roaring with internet Turbo 2001



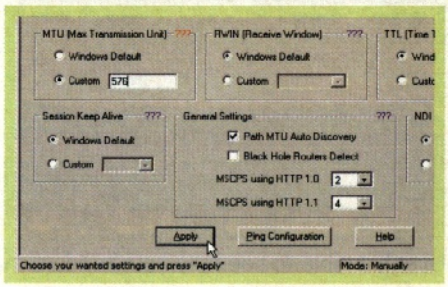
1 Backup the Registry

Before you start playing about with your settings, it's essential to backup the Registry to avoid any catastrophes. Install and run Internet Turbo from this month's disc and click the 'Registry Backup' icon to save the default settings.



2 The Optimization Mode

Now you need to select the type of Net connection you have from the 'Configure Adapter' drop-down menu. In order to set the MaxMTU yourself, you need to choose 'Manually' from the 'Optimization Mode' drop-down menu.



3 Define the MaxMTU

Set the Max Transmission Unit by clicking the 'Custom' radio button and entering '576'. Experts suggest that a setting of 576 is optimum for helping you avoid data packet fragmentation which can lead to slow transfer rates. Click 'Apply'.

→ Manage your downloads

It's all very well setting up your own Net connection to cope with speedy downloads, but if you're really serious about living life in the file transfer fast lane, you need to account for connection problems at the sites you're downloading from.

That's where download management utilities come in. In addition to helping you transfer files as efficiently as possible from a download site, most have some sort of tool for protecting you against lost or broken downloads. This means that even if the file transfer site's connection is threadbare you can still get hold of the goods without too much hassle.

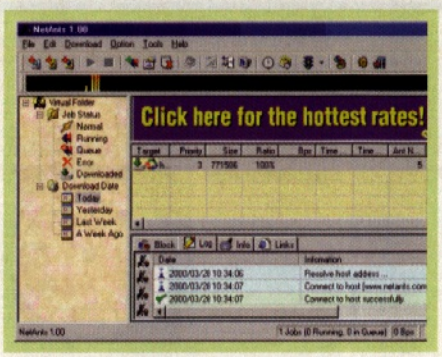
One of the most celebrated tools for this job is Download Accelerator 5, which features multi-server connections to deliver the best possible performance from your connection. The software can recover from lost connections, computer shutdowns and other unforeseen errors, saving you from having to restart a download time and time again. Better still, it even searches for 'mirror' sites, sussing out the quickest and most reliable location to download each file from.

Another popular program, Go!Zilla 4.1, boasts its own proprietary file mirror database and lets you create, add, and modify multiple connections for each download based on your current speed and available bandwidth. By using the Go!Zilla Schedule function, you can line up downloads for a later time, letting you create recurring file transfers and automatically hanging up your connection when the job's done.

We've included both Download Accelerator and Go!Zilla on the cover CD. Also included is GetRight 4.5, which works in a similar way to the others and includes FTP searching to find additional places to grab your chosen booty. It can then switch between each site transparently to ensure that you're always using the fastest one possible.

Break it down

One of the most effective ways a download manager can fire up your transfer speeds is through multi-part downloading. NetAnts, for example, allows you to maximise your downloading potential by making multiple FTP or HTTP connections, each of which will download a separate part of a file. This is absolutely ideal for getting hold of very large files, such as big applications or long movies because it strips them down into manageable chunks that can all be transferred simultaneously.

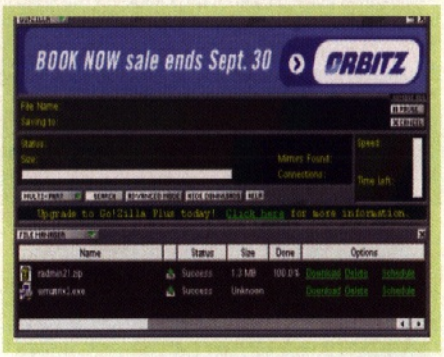


If you have NetAnts in your Web pants, you can rest assured your pages will download with ease

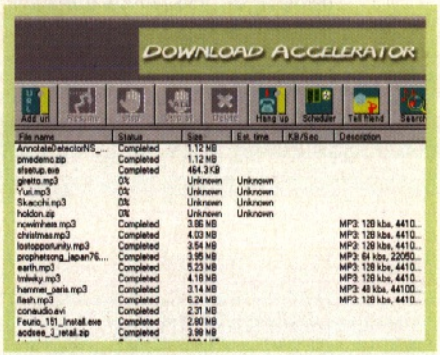
The analogy used by the program's manufacturers is that of a colony of ants digging a tunnel or chopping up leaves. Each ant in the colony does a tiny part of the entire job. By itself, the ant's contribution is minuscule, but when thousands of ants are beavering away together, the results can be amazing. By having five or six different connections all downloading a small piece of the overall file, the whole task is done in a much quicker time.

Life in the fast lane

While we may have all been frustrated by timely file transfers in the past, the future of downloading certainly looks like pretty rosy. If the government continues to support faster Net access and provided BT makes efforts to drop the price of its broadband services, pushing ADSL forward to the home user market, then we should all soon be enjoying the thrills of high speed downloads. Gone will be the yawn-filled days of waiting for a music file or movie to trickle onto your machine, and it will become dead easy to instantly get your hands on the many riches that the Net has to offer.



Set up Go!Zilla (on this issue's cover CD) to manage and simplify your downloads



As the name suggests, Download Accelerator will speed up your downloads using its multi server capabilities

The need for speed – connection capabilities revealed

Use this table to see how your modem matches up in the download stakes

Modem Speed	500K Small graphic	1.5Mb Full size movie	3.5Mb Application
28Kbs	2 min 22 secs	7 min 16 secs	17 mins
56Kbs	1min 13 secs	3 min 34 secs	8 mins 34 secs
ISDN (128Kbs)	32 secs	1 min 38 secs	3 mins 49 secs
ADSL (500 Kbs)	8 secs	24 secs	57 secs

Expert advice for living life in the fast lane

1 Use a download manager

Run a download management utility to maximise your connection to the download site. We've included a choice selection on this month's cover disc.

2 Tweak connection settings

Tinkering with the modem transfer settings in Windows can ensure your modem is always at full whack. Likewise, using a program such as Internet Turbo or SpeedNet to modify the MTU settings will knock your connection into prime condition.

3 Search for mirror sites

Don't always settle for the first download site you come across. Remember that quicker and more reliable connections are available which will give you a much faster download.

4 Broadband connection

While they may be more expensive than a standard unmetered access package, signing up to a broadband ADSL or satellite Internet service will allow you to suck up downloads.

5 Timing is everything

Whenever possible try to download stuff during off-peak hours when there's less traffic on the Net. Downloading early in the morning or late at night should mean download speeds are quicker.

6 Check your equipment

Make sure the telephone wire that runs from your modem to the phone port on the wall is in good nick. Any crack, bends or tears can damage the connection and slow things up. As a general rule, the shorter the line, the better the connection.

7 Schedule your downloads

Most download management utilities such as GetRight, Go!Zilla or Download Accelerator let you pre-schedule a list of downloads. This saves time, because you don't need to stop and start every transfer when downloading multiple files.

8 Visit trusted sites

If you want to download freeware or shareware from the Net, it's usually best to go through a reliable download management site such as Cnet Downloads (**www.download.cnet.com**), TuCows (**www.tucows.com**) or Dave Central (**www.davecentral.com**). If you experience connection problems, these services can normally provide alternative download locations for you to try.

9 Use an online download calculator

A useful way of working out how long a particular file will take to download is by using a Download Speed Calculator. One of the best of these can be found at **www.manx-telecom.com/internet/downloadcalc.asp**.

10 Get a new modem

If all else fails and you can't afford to stump up for an ADSL connection, then you could always try out a new modem. If your current device has been around the block a bit then you should find your dial-up connection rates soar with an upgrade to a new model.

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128MB	512MB 133MHz ECC SDRAM	1GB SDRAM DIMM
1 x 20.4GB	1 x 36GB 10,000rpm SCSI Hard disk	3 x 36GB 10,000rpm SCSI Hard disk
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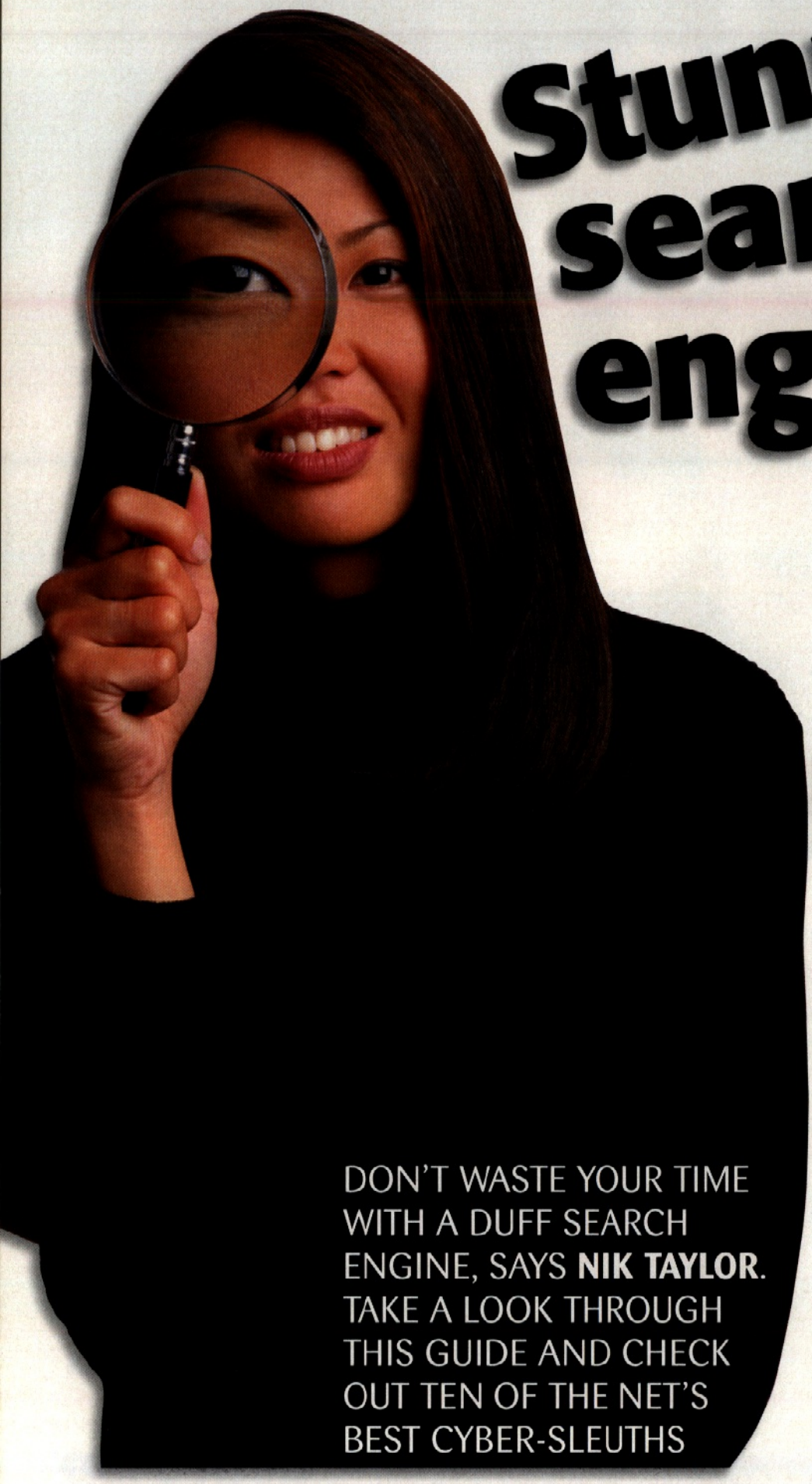


Stunning search engines

SITE TEST

DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME WITH A DUFF SEARCH ENGINE, SAYS **NIK TAYLOR**. TAKE A LOOK THROUGH THIS GUIDE AND CHECK OUT TEN OF THE NET'S BEST CYBER-SLEUTHS

Using a search engine is a lot like going out with a beautiful and intelligent woman. When you're first introduced, you'll be astounded by her broad knowledge and amazing ability to show you all manner of entertaining things. You'll become attached, and forgo the advances of all others. Eventually, you'll forget the others even exist.

But as with any relationship, once you've been together for a while, you'll start to notice faults. With a girlfriend, this might be her insistence on squeezing toothpaste from the middle of the tube, or her fuzzy-headed interpretations of the offside rule.

With your search engine of preference, it's likely to be the just-as-irritating realisation that too often you're spending hours wading through irrelevant search results.

Fortunately, it's far easier to change your search engine than your missus. And it's a good idea to do so, because by scouring the Net with more than one search site, you'll find what you're after far quicker.

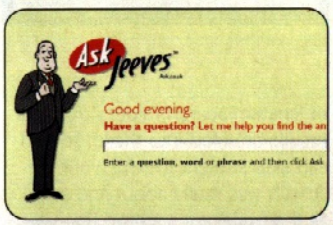
It matters not whether you're a dyed-in-the-wool Google goggler, or a confirmed AltaVista-aholic, you'll certainly benefit from trying a few different searchers from time to time. You might think you've grown out of it, but even beginner-friendly search engines such as Ask Jeeves have something to offer the inquisitive Net user.

Over the next few pages, we'll give you the lowdown on ten of the top search engines on the Net. What they do, what they don't and whether you should have them in your bookmarks folder.

Ask Jeeves

www.ask.co.uk

A FRIENDLY BUTLER named Jeeves may seem an odd mascot for the Internet, but there's no doubt the old fellow has become something of an institution. This site's 'natural language' basis makes it one of the first clicks for any beginner, but that's not to say it fails to cater for the more experienced user. The problem is, try asking Jeeves about any general topics and your request is automatically straight-jacketed into a selection of questions he thinks you should have asked. However, try a specific query and the glorified tea-boy comes into his own. For instance, the poser 'What is the principal currency of Bolivia?' instantly yielded not only the answer, but also photographs of bank notes and a currency converter. One touch we particularly like is the bar that stays at the top while you surf through your results. Using this handy feature, you can easily navigate through your search results, without resorting to constant clicking of the 'back' button.

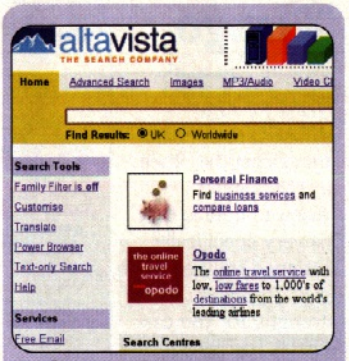


The verdict

Quality of results:	★★★★★
Speed:	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★★
Overall percentage:	75%

✔ A fast, simple searcher

✖ Can be restrictive



AltaVista

www.altavista.co.uk

ONCE THE BASTION of simple yet effective searching, AltaVista then got a bit carried away and added all kinds of frivolous gubbins to its main site. These days, the whole affair has happily returned almost to its old self, with most of the features now useful and relevant. Separate searchers for MP3 files and video clips are included, although these are interesting rather than particularly accurate. However, the main search engine on the site is as good as ever. You'll need to bring all your Boolean logic skills into play, though, for ask anything vague and you'll be submerged under a flood of irrelevant results. This site covers an astonishing array of languages as well, so if you're into looking up lacrosse teams from Latvia, you'll probably be in luck. Various options are also available to help you customise your search, including such niceties as a 'family filter'.

The verdict

Quality of results:	★★★★½
Speed:	★★★★½
Ease of use:	★★★★½
Overall percentage:	79%

✔ Great search results

✖ Can be tricky to use

Dogpile

www.dogpile.co.uk

AFTER FLOATING ACROSS the Atlantic, Dogpile has now plopped onto the British chunk of the Net with this UK-centric offering. Some of the less important features you'll find on the US version are missing from here, but for most that will be a positive boon since it leads to a clearer, less cluttered site. All the useful stuff has made the transition, so you can search for files, MP3s, images or other types of multimedia. Speed-wise, Dogpile's results shoot through respectably quickly, without ever threatening to scorch the dog's dangly bits. Accuracy is mostly impressive, with each search engine Dogpile ferrets through limited to ten results, so you don't get overwhelmed with useless data. And because you're viewing the best ten results from each included site, you should find what you're after pretty quick. The little doggy mascot on the site even sports a natty Union Jack coat. Ahh.

The verdict

Quality of results:	★★★★½
Speed:	★★★★½
Ease of use:	★★★★★
Overall percentage:	84%

✔ Relevant, accurate results

✖ The 'joke of the day'

Google

www.google.co.uk

FOR MANY PEOPLE, this is the only search site in existence. Google has a legion of followers who will all swear blindly that it's the best search engine bar none. And to be fair, they're probably right. However, it's got to be said there are a few niggles. The famously utilitarian front page of the site belies the huge amount of content the site now searches through. When you're searching for something obscure this is grand, because Google is a site that's got a damn good chance of turning it up. However, if your search is a little more prosaic, you can sometimes find yourself drowning in a sea of links. But this is a minor quibble, for Google remains the business, and when it comes to speed there are none better. Just think how many times you've decided to 'Google' something, and ask yourself how many other search engines' names are on their way to becoming a verb.

TOP SCORER

The verdict

Quality of results:	★★★★½
Speed:	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★★
Overall percentage:	94%

✔ Huge, up-to-date coverage

✖ Can be overwhelming

Stupid searching

FOR SOME PEOPLE, perfectly good search sites such as Google, AltaVista and Northern Light just aren't enough. Nope, these people just feel the need to go out and make their own. We're talking about characters such as those behind Antique Tractors Online (**www.antiquetractorsonline.com**). Let's get this straight – this is a search engine for finding antique tractors. Unless you're a nostalgic farmer, it's hard to see the appeal. But we're happy to report that the site seems to be booming. Mind you, it's not unusual by any means. The Net is positively bulging with search engines all looking for stuff no one wants to find anyway. Try, for example, **www.bloodlinks.org/links**. Apparently, this is a 'portal for dark, occult, goth, artistic and Satanic sites'. Tasteful, eh?

The farming community may be in crisis, but the antique tractor trade is booming

A little less dark, but no less scary, is Dolls House (**www.eloradollhouse.com/database**), a search engine designed, specifically it seems, for people who want to buy evil-looking dolls. Many of which seem to have turned up at Disturbing Auctions (**www.disturbingauctions.com**), a searcher that delights in the freaky stuff people sell on eBay. But despite all these weird sites, some people still can't find what they're after. These are the people whose queries end up on Disturbing Search Requests **http://searchrequests.weblogs.com**, an excellent list of very, very worrying searches.

Would you feel safe living with one of the offerings from The Doll's House?

Lycos

www.lycos.co.uk

LYCOS IS A classic example of a search engine that has decided to 'diversify'. Enter the home page and you'll struggle to pick out the search field against the swarm of other content. Links to horoscopes, dating services and shopping guides all battle for your attention, giving rise to the thought that perhaps the searching side of the site has been neglected. It's certainly been slowed down – since Lycos the dog (what is it with search engines and dogs?) often limps back with your results in his teeth after a good few seconds of blank screen action. Sometimes it seems as though Lycos has chewed them a little as well, with searches for something as basic as a football team yielding somewhat bizarre results. Having said that, this does the job as a basic searcher, and the directory's pretty good if you like that sort of thing.

The verdict

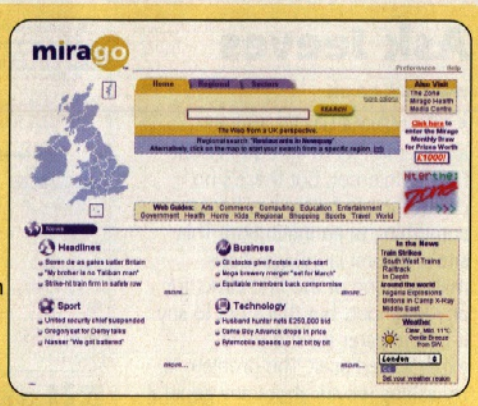
Quality of results:	★★★★★
Speed:	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★★
Overall percentage:	62%

✔ Choice of search or directory

✖ Far too slow

Mirago

www.mirago.co.uk



WHAT MAKES MIRAGO really stand out against the other search engines reviewed here is that it's very specifically designed for the British user. This is its strength, for you can quickly narrow your search to include only certain towns within the British Isles. Which is a handy feature if, for instance, you're searching for a scuba diving club in Bournemouth. You just select the town you want and then type in the search you want to make, and all the results are limited to your locality. It works far better than more global search engines could hope to, and makes Mirago a shining example of the benefits of specialising and not spreading yourself too thin. After you have honed your search query, you can take further delight in how quickly the results are returned, as well as the fact that the site is clear, tidy and well-presented. Mirago is never going to challenge the Googles out there, but then again, it doesn't want to.

MIRAGO IS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR US BRITS

The verdict

Quality of results:	★★★★☆
Speed:	★★★★☆
Ease of use:	★★★★★
Overall percentage:	89%

✔ Accurate, localised searches

✖ Won't be your main searcher

HOW

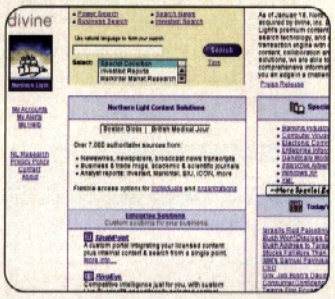
Searches search

FINDING WHAT YOU want on the Internet isn't just about finding a good search engine – it's about finding the right one. Two main types of search engines exist – crawlers and directories. The basic difference is that crawlers do the work for you. Go to a directory, and it's basically the same as looking something up in the Yellow Pages. You simply click on the subject you're interested in, and then click on the sub-topics. The problem with these sites, of course, is that you can only search the sites that are listed.

Crawlers, on the other hand, can search through millions of sites in an instant. The reason these sites are so →

Northern Light

www.northernlight.com



THE FIRST THING that strikes you about the Northern Light Web site is how horrible it looks. The site is basically a text-heavy mess, with the search field hidden somewhere in the top corner. However, while the site's designer may have had an off day, the searcher itself stands up pretty well. Northern Light makes much of its ability to search through thousands of original documents – and if you really need something from an old copy of the Lancet, this is great. But the more casual surfer will find the basic search engine of much more use. Tap in your request in the usual way and you'll get a decent selection of answers. More importantly, however, you'll also get a selection of 'custom search folders'. All your results are filed into these, so you can skip straight to what your search was really about and avoid all the irrelevant claptrap that you might have to wade through on other searchers.

The verdict

Quality of results:	★★★★☆
Speed:	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★☆
Overall percentage:	90%

✔ Results sorted into order

✖ Horrible-looking site

Open Directory

www.dmoz.org

IN MANY WAYS, the Open Directory project harks back to the old days of the Internet, when any idea was possible. The idea in this case is to get everyone on the Net working together to collate a catalogue of every Web site. It's a plan that's worked well, with thousands of people around the world editing the three million or so links that make up this directory. You navigate the directory in the usual way, either by clicking on the subject headers or making a standard search (although this second option is somewhat limited). The snag is, of course, that the site suffers from the usual problems associated with directories. There's no way a human-edited site can hope to keep up with the crawlers and meta-searchers on the Internet, and you're likely to come up against more than a few dead ends. However, if you know exactly what you're looking for and how to find it, this can be a useful site.

The verdict

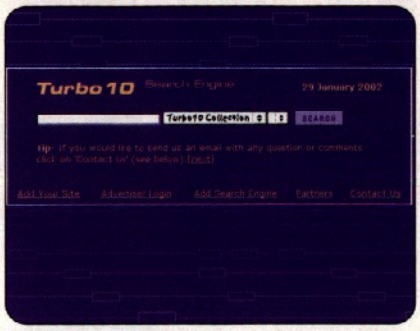
Quality of results:	★★★★☆
Speed:	★★★★☆
Ease of use:	★★★★☆
Overall percentage:	69%

✔ Comprehensive directory

✖ Limited results

Turbo 10

www.turbo10.com



TURBO 10 IS one of the newest search engines on the block, and considering the competition, really needs to do something special to stand out. But rather than doing anything flash, this site simply performs the basics very well. What it tries (and succeeds) to do is spelt out in the name. This site is extremely fast, and it sorts your results into batches of ten. The idea of this is that you don't have to scroll down to the bottom of every results page to find what you're after. In addition to this, a similar idea to Northern Light's 'custom search folders' is used, whereby your results are split up into various topics. Putting 'turbo' in the site's name is really asking for trouble, but the site does stand up to it. It is both extremely fast, and pleasingly accurate.

The verdict

Quality of results:	★★★★☆
Speed:	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★☆
Overall percentage:	87%

✔ Fast and accurate

✖ Sometimes limited

Webcrawler

www.webcrawler.com

WEBCRAWLER HAS TAKEN a leaf out of Google's book and gone for the minimalist look. Gone is all the junk that used to surround the site, to be replaced by a basic search window and a few directory terms. Directory buffs will find this section does its job okay, but really it's a little surplus to requirements. The main searcher is far more useful and using this you can hunt for sites, news or photos. Don't bother with the news searcher, though, because it's complete junk. A search for Tony Blair dug up the sum total of zero news stories, while undertaking a similar search for 'Dubya' Bush unearthed just two articles. The photo searcher fares a little better, but it's really only site searches that are worth doing on here, with the excellent 'Zoom In' feature enabling you to quickly home in on the results you're after.

The verdict

Quality of results:	★★★★☆
Speed:	★★★☆☆
Ease of use:	★★★★☆
Overall percentage:	70%

✔ Useful 'zoom in' feature

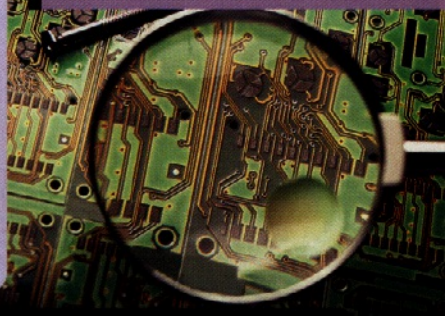
✖ Hopeless news search

HOW

Searches search

continued

quick, and the reason they're called crawlers is because they use software robots called spiders. These constantly search through the Internet, looking for changes and new sites. Spiders will scan through the text on pages and also look for meta tags. These are index words entered by the page owner to tell search engines what the site is about. Because this whole process is computerised, crawler engines offer a huge amount of results. Some sites, known as 'meta-searchers', collaborate the results from several crawler sites and present them all on one page.



Fully-featured finders – a breakdown of the Net's main searching powerhouses

Name and URL	Type	Anything special?	Multimedia?	Boolean operators?	Field search?	Wild card?	Natural language query?	Language searching?
Ask Jeeves www.ask.co.uk	Meta	Downloadable toolbar	None	None	No	No	Yes	No
AltaVista www.altavista.co.uk	Crawler	Translation page	MP3, video clips, images	AND, OR, AND NOT, NEAR	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Dog Pile www.dogpile.co.uk	Meta	Mini dogpile window	Images, MP3	AND, OR, NOT	Yes	No	No	No
Google www.google.co.uk	Crawler	Newsgroup searches	Images	OR	Yes	No	No	Yes
Lycos www.lycos.co.uk	Crawler	Directory	Pictures, sounds, video, MP3	none	Yes	No	No	Yes
Mirago www.mirago.co.uk	Crawler	UK regional searching	None	AND, OR, NOT, NEAR, PLUS	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Northern light www.northernlight.com	Crawler	Customisable searching	None	AND, OR, NOT	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Open Directory http://dmoz.org	Directory	Human-edited	None	None	No	Yes	No	No
Turbo 10 www.turbo10.com	Meta	Super-fast	None	None	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Web Crawler www.webcrawler.com	Crawler	Zoom in' feature	Photos	AND, NOT	Yes	No	Yes	No

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ny risk.

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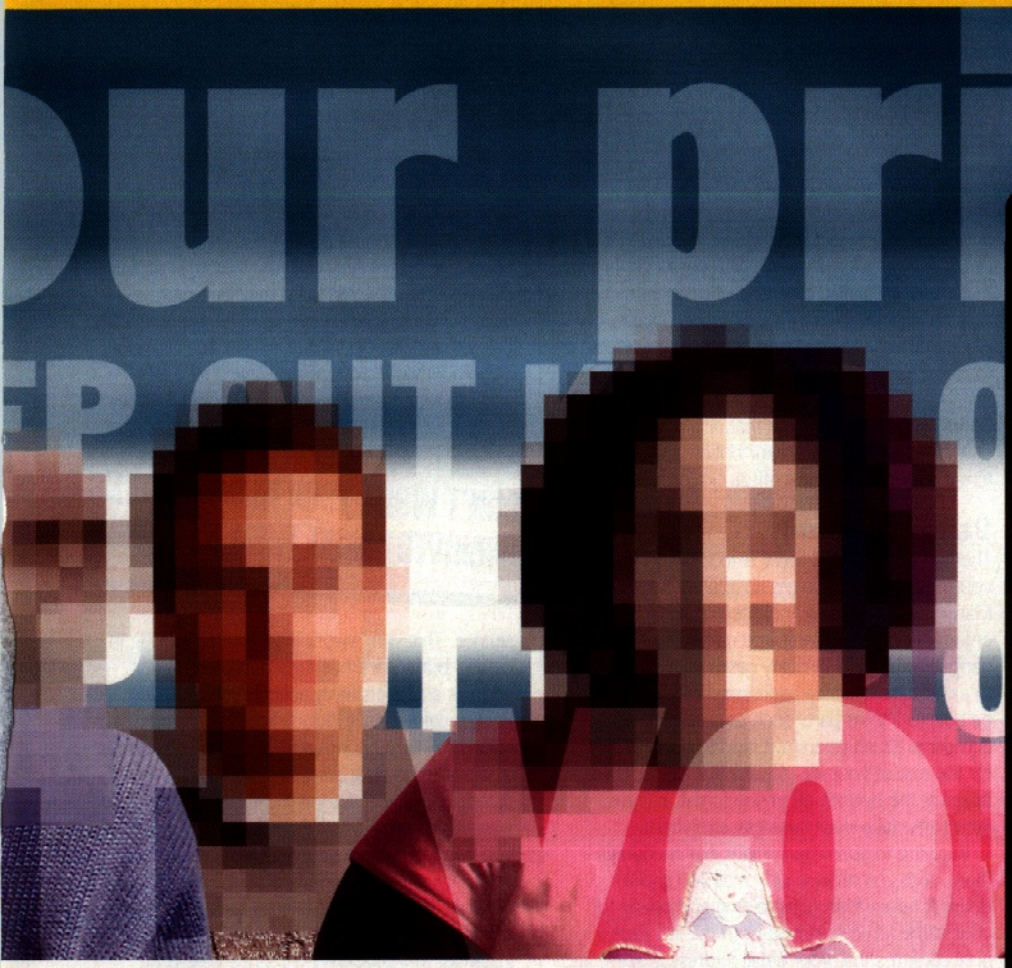
Protect your privacy

WITH THE AMOUNT OF SNOOPERS, SPAMMERS AND FRAUDSTERS ON THE RISE INTERNET SECURITY IS BECOMING A GROWING CONCERN. **ROLAND WADDILOVE** SHOWS YOU HOW TO STAY ONE STEP AHEAD OF THE PACK BY KEEPING YOUR IDENTITY SECURE AND DETAILS OF YOUR ONLINE ACTIVITIES CONFIDENTIAL

Every time you do something on the Internet, someone, somewhere is watching you and taking notes. It hasn't quite happened in quite the way George Orwell predicted in *1984* – well, not yet anyway – but we're under constant scrutiny. In 2002 it's not only possible to discover which Web sites someone has visited, but also to read their email, see where they shop, find out which adverts they've been viewing and much, much more.

Should you be worried? In a word, yes. Filling in forms on a Web site usually means your details will be passed on to third parties who will then spam you, while storing your usernames and passwords to the Net and Web sites leaves you vulnerable if your computer is stolen.

Having your privacy breached is a scary thought and one that demands action. Unless you protect your personal information and keep the things you get up to online private, one day, disaster could strike. But before you start breaking out in a cold sweat, read this feature and let us show you how to surf in safety and security.



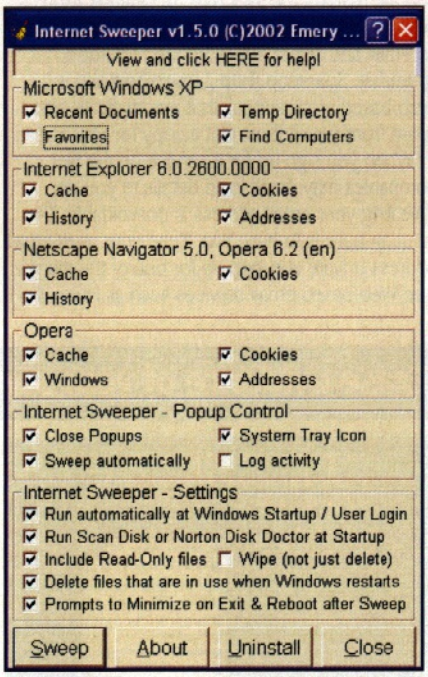
Browsing the Web

Let's suppose you visited a great Web site a few days back and want to return, but can't remember the URL. You could simply display the History pane in Internet Explorer and then click the day to reveal all the sites you visited. The site you want will be right there. But hang on a minute, if you can do that, so can anyone else who gains access to your PC. This could be a problem when computers are shared at work or at home. You might not want your children to see a Web site containing unsuitable material, or your work colleagues to see your online banking details from when you went online at lunchtime to pay a bill.

The URLs of the sites you visit are stored in your Web browser's History and the pages you viewed are stored in the cache. It is important you clear these out whenever you do something online that you don't want others to see. The simplest solution in IE is to select 'Tools', 'Internet Options'. Click the 'Clear History' and 'Delete Files' buttons to erase your online tracks.

Start typing in a Web address and Internet Explorer will helpfully enter the rest of the URL. This is called AutoComplete and it works for Web-based forms, too. While this can save you plenty of typing, it can also provide thieves with private information about you, so go to the 'Content' tab in Internet Options and click 'AutoComplete'. Clear the tick boxes and empty your History.

Cookies are small files stored on your computer that have been created by Web sites to store information about you and may contain preferences, shopping habits, usernames and passwords. Although they can be useful, they still pose a security risk. Internet Explorer 6 gives you the option to delete them in the Internet Options dialog so click 'Delete Cookies'. Go to the 'Privacy' tab where you'll find a slider that enables you to limit the ability of Web sites to store cookies. This ranges from 'Accept All' to 'Block All', but some Web sites won't work when 'Block All' is used. However, you can always click the 'Edit' button and enter their URL, or select a medium setting which blocks some cookies, but not all. →



Stop the snoopers from finding anything in your Temporary Internet Files with third party utilities like Internet Sweeper

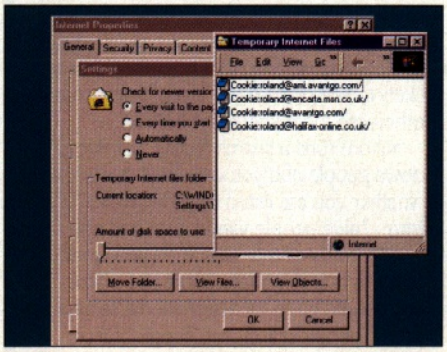
Cover your tracks in IE

1 Clean slate

Hide your online activities by selecting 'Tools', 'Options' in Internet Explorer. Click the 'Clear History' button to remove records of Web sites you have visited and set the number of days to 0 to ensure no more are stored.

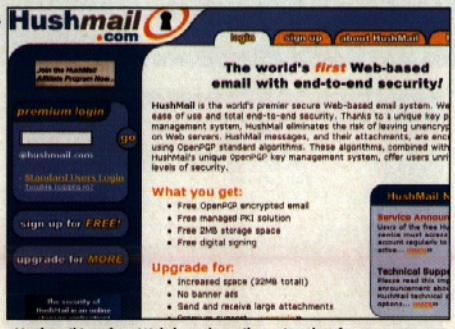
2 Erase away

Click the 'Delete Files' button in the Temporary Internet Files section and in the dialog that pops up, tick 'Delete all offline content'. Click 'OK' and all the Web pages stored on your hard drive will be erased.



3 Polish off the cookies

IE6 owners can click the 'Delete Cookies' button, but everyone else needs to click the 'Settings' button, then the 'View Files' button in the next dialog. Delete the cookie files you don't need, which is most, if not all.



Hushmail is a free Web-based email service that focuses on security. Messages and attachments are encrypted

You might assume that having told Internet Explorer to delete all traces of Web activity you would be safe, but there are still some tools that can retrieve deleted information. Webroot Software (**www.webroot.com**) has several utilities that clean up the History, cache and other online tracks. Internet Cleanup from Ontrack (**www.ontrack.com**) also offers similar features for covering your tracks and for the same price ($29.99). If you're looking for a free alternative, Internet Sweeper (**www.geocities.com/Internet_Sweeper**) should do the job.

MultiProxy (**www.multiproxy.org**) and Guidescope (**www.guidescope.com/home**) are free utilities that help you to surf the Web anonymously by installing what are known as proxy servers. Requests for Web pages go through these programs and hide you from anybody who may be snooping in on your Internet access. Anonymizer (**www.anonymizer.com**) is available in free and full paid-for versions and protects you from tracking, hackers and others. It installs as a button in Internet Explorer that acts as an on/off switch to hide or reveal your online activities. IDzap (**www.idzap.com**) offers similar facilities.

Sending email

The one basic rule of email is to never give out your email address unless absolutely necessary. Many free services on the Internet require you to enter your email address into a form, but what will happen to it then? In many cases it will be added to a database of email addresses, which will then be sold to a third party such as a marketing company. It's an open invitation to be spammed for the rest of your life. Always tick the 'opt-out' boxes at the bottom off online forms. If there aren't any, take your business elsewhere.

Replying to spammers might just encourage them, so if you receive junk mail you should delete it rather than complaining and asking for your name to be removed from the list. Replying only confirms that your email address is active and you are reading the junk mail. In Outlook Express you can right-click the name in the 'From' field of an email and select 'Block Sender' to stop a spammer. Spamcop (**http://spamcop.net**) is a Web-based email service that automatically filters spam from your Inbox. Get a copy for $30 a year.

When you sign up for a service on the Net, companies may email login details to you, so revealing your email address is unavoidable. The solution here is to have two. Keep your main email address private and sign up for one of the many free Web-based email services such as Hotmail (**www.hotmail.com**). When asked for your email address, you should quote your Webmail instead of your real one. Abandon the Webmail account every six months and get a new free one elsewhere. Your old account will be automatically deleted and your new one will be free of spam.

Sometimes it's possible to use a fake email address to get into a Web site or access a free service. This won't work if the site emails log in details, but sometimes they don't need your address and are simply collecting email addresses. Popular fake emails include me@home.com, noone@nowhere.com and other obvious ones.

Many email addresses are collected automatically and automated software scans Web sites, newsgroup postings and bulletin boards. If you need to provide an email address, for contact details on a Web site, for instance, you can always disguise it in a way that is easy for humans to decipher, but hard for software to detect. For instance, m-i-c-k-e-y-@-d-i-s-n-e-y-.-c-o-m.

You should also remember that emails are never private unless you take steps to ensure this. Hackers can intercept messages and read them and your boss may be monitoring what you send through the company email system. You should therefore not say anything that you would not wish posted in a public place. However, secure systems are available, such as Hushmail (**www.hushmail.com**). This free service enables you to send encrypted emails that are digitally signed.

Digitally signing an email adds special information to it that guarantees it came from you

DON'T WANT YOUR INDISCRETIONS ARCHIVED? NUKE THEM AT GOOGLE

Check yourself out online

HAS THE DAMAGE already been done? Are your personal details widely available to every Tom, Dick and Harry on the Net? Perhaps you'd better check. Windows has a built in Find facility, just click 'Start', 'Search', 'People' and enter your name. Select a service in the 'Look In' box and click 'Find Now'.

Of course, this is not a comprehensive search so next you should head for the search engines. Begin with Google (**www.google.com**). Enter your name into the Web search page to see if you are on the Web, then go to the Groups tab to check whether your name has cropped up in any newsgroups. If you've created a Web site or posted a newsgroup message, then you are likely to see references to your name, but otherwise there should be nothing.

Yahoo! runs a search facility that tracks down people and you can use it to discover whether you are listed in its database. Go to **http://ukie.people.yahoo.com** and enter your name. Another search engine worth trying is **http://peoplesearch.net** where you should go to the international section at **http://peoplesearch.net/peoplesearch/peoplesearch_international.html**. At **www.search-shark.com/people-finders.html** you'll find 35 links to free services that enable you to track down people and uncover their personal details. Scary or what?

Erase evidence of your surfing with Window Washer

1 The prewash
When Window Washer (on the CD) starts, it displays the standard wash items list. Look carefully down the list and tick each item that you would like to clean from your computer. Click the 'Wash Now' button to cover your Web tracks.

2 More cleaning
Click the 'Options' button next to Internet Explorer at the bottom of the list to display this new list. Tick each item to clean. 'Downloaded Program Files' is not ticked by default because it often contains useful items.

and not someone else. This facility can be added to Outlook Express and also enables you to encrypt messages and ensure they haven't been tampered with. Verisign provides personal digital IDs and a 60-day free certificate is available at **www.verisign.com/products/class1**. Digital IDs normally cost $14.95 a year. PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) is another popular email encryption add-on for Outlook Express and you can download a free version from **www.download.com**.

Making postings

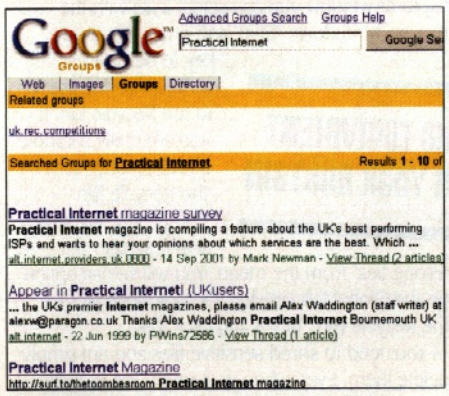
Posting messages in newsgroups, forums and bulletin boards leaves you completely unprotected – it's the equivalent of leaving your front door wide open. Whatever you do, never give out your real email address in any message. Not only will automated software pick it up, you may also be flamed (subjected to a barrage of hostile emails) if you upset the regular visitors with any comments you make. Hidden information in postings can leave a digital trail right back to your ISP, IP number or even your email address.

Once your personal details, such as your name and email address, have been made public, getting them removed from systems is next to impossible, mainly because address lists and personal details are bought and sold every day by Internet marketeers. If you've ever posted to a newsgroup and wished you hadn't, it is worth visiting Google (**www.google.com**) where there is an archive of the last 20 years of newsgroup postings amounting to some 700 million messages. Select the 'Groups' tab and then enter your name or something similar to identify the messages you posted. You may be surprised at what it turns up.

Fortunately, messages can be removed from the archive (a process Net users charmingly refer to as 'nuking') and your first port of call should be the automatic removal tool at **http://services.google.com:8882/urlconsole/controller**. You'll need to register, providing the same email address that was used to post the messages, then details of what to do will be sent to you. If the email address is no longer valid you must email **groups-support@google.com**, but certain conditions must be met so check out **www.google.com/googlegroups/help.html** for more details.

If you're frequently in the habit of posting controversial newsgroup messages and don't want your irreverent utterances to be archived, there's one cunning little trick you can try. If you add the following to the header or as the first line of the message: **X-No-archive**, you can be sure your cutting remarks won't come back to haunt you.

For those eager to take healthy caution to the extreme, there are services available that enable you to post anonymously to newsgroups, with the sole aim of protecting your identity. Take a look at **www.usenet.com** and **www.uncensored-news.com**. Both offer newsgroup access for just under $10 a month and enable you to →

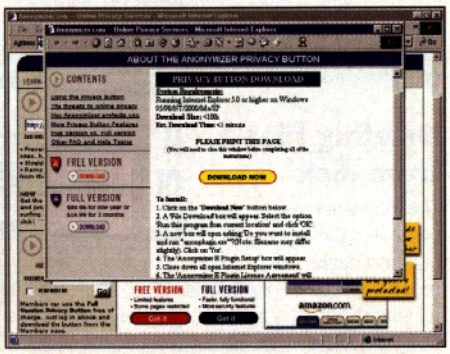


Use Google to search back through 20 years of newsgroup postings for your messages, then nuke them!

Stay hidden with Anonymizer

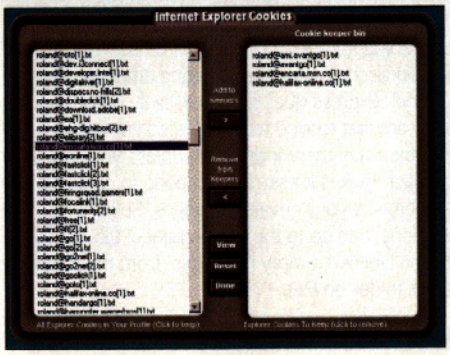
1 Secret squirrel

You can visit any site on the Web anonymously without revealing any personal details about yourself or your computer by going to **www.anonymizer.com** and entering the URL in the box on the left. Type the address and click 'Go'.



2 Surfing shield

Typing in a URL only lets you view one page at a time. To surf anonymously, click the 'Free Version' link on the home page and then click the 'Download Now' button on this page. Download it then double click it.



3 Selective cleaning

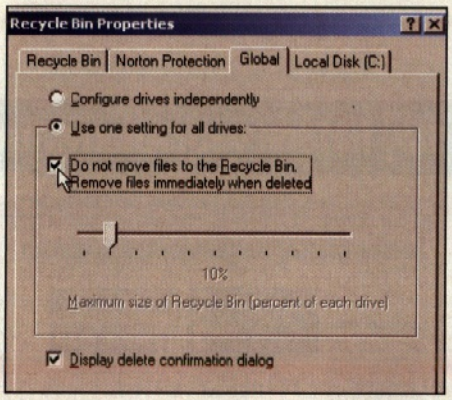
Click the 'Keep' button next to 'Cookies' to open this window. Select cookies you want to keep on the left and click the right arrow to ensure they are not deleted. A useful cookie might be on from your online bank.

4 Cover your tracks

Return to the main screen and click 'Wash Options'. Tick 'Run Autowash Every' at the bottom and in the list choose a time period. Leave Window Washer running and as you browse the Web, it will erase your tracks.

3 Anonymous browsing

Next time you start Internet Explorer you will see a new Anonymizer button in the toolbar. Click the red shield once to turn it on and then type a URL into the Address box or click a Favorite to surf anonymously.



Deleted files are not erased and they end up in the Recycle Bin. Right click it and select 'Properties'. Use this option to disable it

post without using your real name or revealing your IP address.

Join **www.sendfakemail.com** for the small fee of just $9 and you can send emails or post messages in a newsgroup without leaving any trace of who you are, what your email address is, your IP address or any other information. These type of services are known as 'remailers' and they send your messages on a rather tortuous route through servers that strip out identifying content and make them impossible to trace. Get a free Web-based email account at **http://anonymous.to** and you'll find information in how to use a remailer to hide your identity at **http://anonymous.to/remailers.html**.

Deleting files from disk

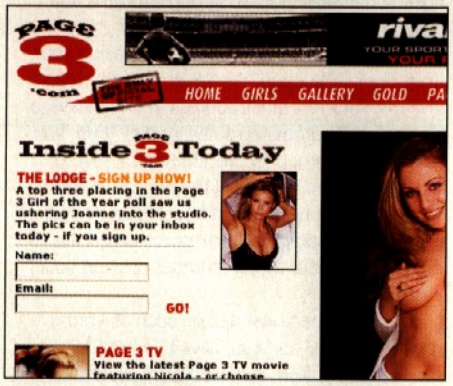
The longer you use your computer, the more your personal details will be recorded, such as passwords, name, address, telephone number, and perhaps even credit card details. There may be emails to your online bank and letters written with Word, home or business accounts created with Excel or a money manager. It is surprising how much personal and private information ends up getting stored on a computer.

Never leave such sensitive information lying around; it is best to delete it as soon as you have finished with it. You may think that deleting a file or email has removed it from your computer's hard disk, but this is not true. Most files that you delete are simply transferred to the Recycle Bin. Anyone who has access to your computer, such as co-workers, computer repair technicians, and even your kids, can rummage through the Recycle Bin and recover the files you have deleted. It's the electronic equivalent of routing through your dustbin outside your house in search of discarded letters and bank statements.

You must empty the Recycle Bin to remove the deleted files from the system. Right-click it and select 'Empty Recycle Bin' from the menu. In an Explorer window you can select a file with the mouse, hold down 'Shift' and press the 'Delete' key to delete files without moving them to the Recycle Bin. If you are really paranoid about security, turn off the Recycle Bin completely. Right-click it and select 'Properties' from the menu. You will see an option on the Global tab labelled 'Do not move files to the Recycle Bin'. Tick it and click 'OK'.

IT'S THE ELECTRONIC EQUIVALENT OF RUMMAGING IN YOUR DUSTBIN

You need to shred sensitive files and not simply delete them. Even when you empty the Recycle Bin or disable it, files are not really deleted. Windows simply marks the space they occupy on the hard disk as free. Using special tools, a hacker can reconstruct the files you deleted. However, there are equally powerful tools to combat this. Symantec's Norton Utilities and other disk tools are able to shred files by overwriting the area of the disk that they occupy. They will do this many times to ensure that there is no chance of recovery. Windows File Shredder from **www.mazepath.com** is an inexpensive shareware utility that completely erases files.



Check your company's policy on accessing the Net. Failure to do so may result in you getting the sack for visiting sites like this

This effectively deals with the files you can see, but what about the ones you can't? Some files are invisible under normal circumstances and they may contain personal information about you. In any Explorer window, select 'Tools', 'Options' and go to the 'View' tab. Select 'Show hidden files and folders', then deselect 'Hide protected operating system files'. This will enable you to see the hidden files on the hard disk drive. You may also find hidden backups and temporary files for word processing documents and other files.

A quick and easy way of clearing out a lot of unnecessary files is to select 'Start', 'Programs', 'Accessories', 'System Tools', 'Disk Cleanup'. Tick everything and clean up your hard disk. You should also be aware that deleting emails in Outlook Express does not necessarily delete them. They are first moved to the Deleted Items folder and they stay there indefinitely unless you empty it, which makes it easy for someone to come along and browse your private messages. Select 'Tools', 'Options' and go to the 'Maintenance' tab. Tick the option labelled 'Empty messages' from the Deleted Items folder on Exit.

In the office

The hard disk in your office PC probably contains quite sensitive information that you would rather was not made public. For instance, you may have company accounts, personnel records, salaries, contracts and other files. If you do have such information then hopefully you aren't also using Windows 95, 98 or ME, because none of these

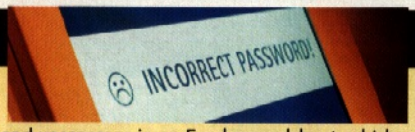
Chatting online

U W U

CHATTING ONLINE TO friends and relatives or business colleagues can be great fun, but you should be aware that instant messaging programs are not secure. It is possible for anyone to intercept instant messages and to eavesdrop on conversations, so be careful what you say and don't write anything you wouldn't want made public. You can get round this, however, by encrypting ICQ messages using programs like PGP (**www.pgp.com**), which is available for exactly this purpose.

Just using an instant messenger has its problems. You have to sign up and fill in forms, which means that someone on the Net has all your details, and your online profile can reveal information about you. Chat rooms are obviously public domains, so it goes without saying that you shouldn't reveal any details about yourself in them. Many AOL users create a separate screen name for use solely in chat rooms to ensure that their main account doesn't get spammed.

Protect your passwords



AS YOU USE the Internet you'll start to accumulate passwords. One to get connected, another to collect your email, your online bank details, instant messaging program ID, and so on. You should never give out passwords, which may sound like obvious advice, but AOL users are often the target of fraudsters who pretend to be AOL staff asking members to enter their password into a form. Don't do it!

Most Net users find they accumulate more passwords than they can remember, so they must be written down. Don't use sticky yellow notes pasted onto your monitor. In fact, don't keep them anywhere near the computer. However, some people keep their passwords and usernames in an Excel spreadsheet, which can then be saved with password protection to prevent access by unauthorised users.

Internet Explorer can remember usernames, passwords and the information you type into Web forms. All this is available to anyone who accesses your computer, though, so unless these features are disabled, beware of public computers in offices, libraries and cybercafés. Your company may also monitor and log all Internet traffic, so bear in mind that this could lead to your online banking details being recorded should you use your work computer to check your balance.

operating systems are secure. Anyone passing by your desk at lunchtime or after work can switch on your PC and access information on your hard drive, even if the computer asks you to log on and provide a password. Windows NT, 2000 and XP have far better security and this is usually sufficient enough to deter most casual snoopers. Access can easily be password protected and if necessary, you should upgrade any PCs used to store private or sensitive information of a personal nature.

Do you know what your company's Internet policy is? In some businesses it is a sackable offence to access certain Web sites. You know the ones we mean! Some companies allow employees Internet access at lunchtimes and after work, whereas others ban it completely. It all depends on the type of business you work for. The security standards implemented at a bank, say, differ wildly to those of a small business selling widgets.

Emails can also land you in hot water – you should exercise extreme caution in what you say. As noted earlier, emails are not secure so you must be careful not to criticise your boss, your firm or its products. Some common sense is required, though, and while it is not acceptable to email a member of the general public with criticisms of a product, it is usually okay to send an internal report to the manager responsible so that problems can be put right. Some companies will monitor emails sent through the company email system and also Internet access, so take care because it might not be safe to log on to your online bank.

It is common for emails with jokes and amusing attachments to be passed around and while it might be fun for a while, it may well be against company policy. Even if the attachments are harmless, they consume bandwidth on the internal network and Internet connection and this slows down the system. If you have any doubts about the material you are receiving or considering forwarding to a colleague, do nothing at all. Let others carry the can, not you.

Ten top privacy links

Eff
www.eff.org/Privacy/eff_privacy_top_12.html

Privacy Rights Clearing House
www.privacyrights.org

Junkbusters
www.junkbusters.com

Privacy 2000
www.privacy2000.org

Privacy International
www.privacyinternational.org

Expert Guide to Online Privacy and Security
www.expert-guides.com/library/privacy.asp

SiegeSoft
www.siegesoft.com/_html/privacy_info.asp

Elsop's Anti-Spam Page
www.elsop.com/wrc/nospam.htm

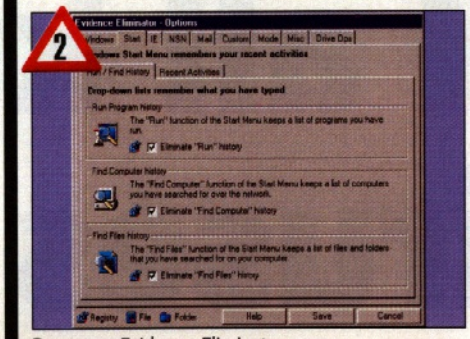
EcoFuture
www.ecofuture.org/jnkmail.html

Internet Handbooks
www.internet-handbooks.co.uk/izone/privacy/campaigns.htm

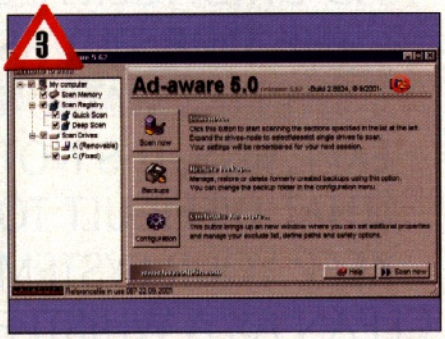
Get military strength privacy protection

HAVE A LOOK around the Web, and you'll soon find that there are all manner of tools available to erase traces of Internet activity from your hard disk, protect emails from eavesdroppers and block spyware programs that send details of your Web habits back to their owners. Without spending any money at all, you can guard your privacy pretty well and if you want military level protection, that's also available – albeit at a price.

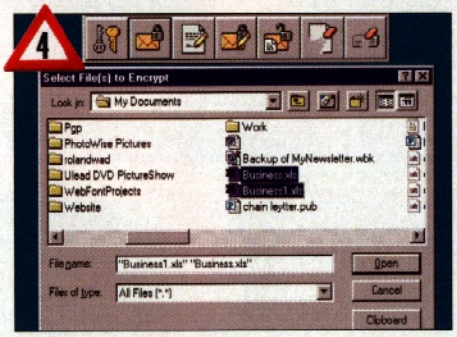
Program: Window Washer
URL: www.webroot.com
Licence: Shareware, $30
This is one of the best utilities for removing traces of Net activity from your computer. Cleaning sessions can be scheduled so that they get to work on your files automatically.



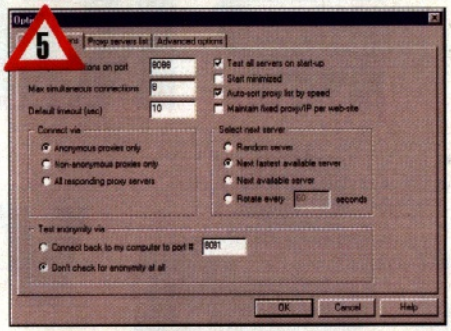
Program: Evidence Eliminator
URL: www.evidence-eliminator.com
Licence: Shareware, $149.95
Okay, so this doesn't actually fall into the 'cheap' category, but it claims to be able to defeat powerful forensic analysis equipment. Evidence Eliminator quickly removes traces of both Windows and Internet activities.



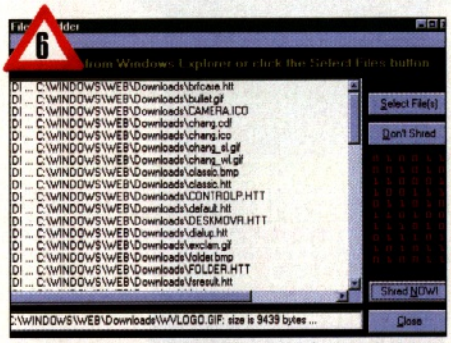
Program: Ad-aware
URL: www.lsfileserv.com
Licence: Freeware
Ad-aware scans your hard disk drive for spyware and removes any components that it detects. It effortlessly deletes registry entries and hidden programs that could monitor and report your Internet activity.



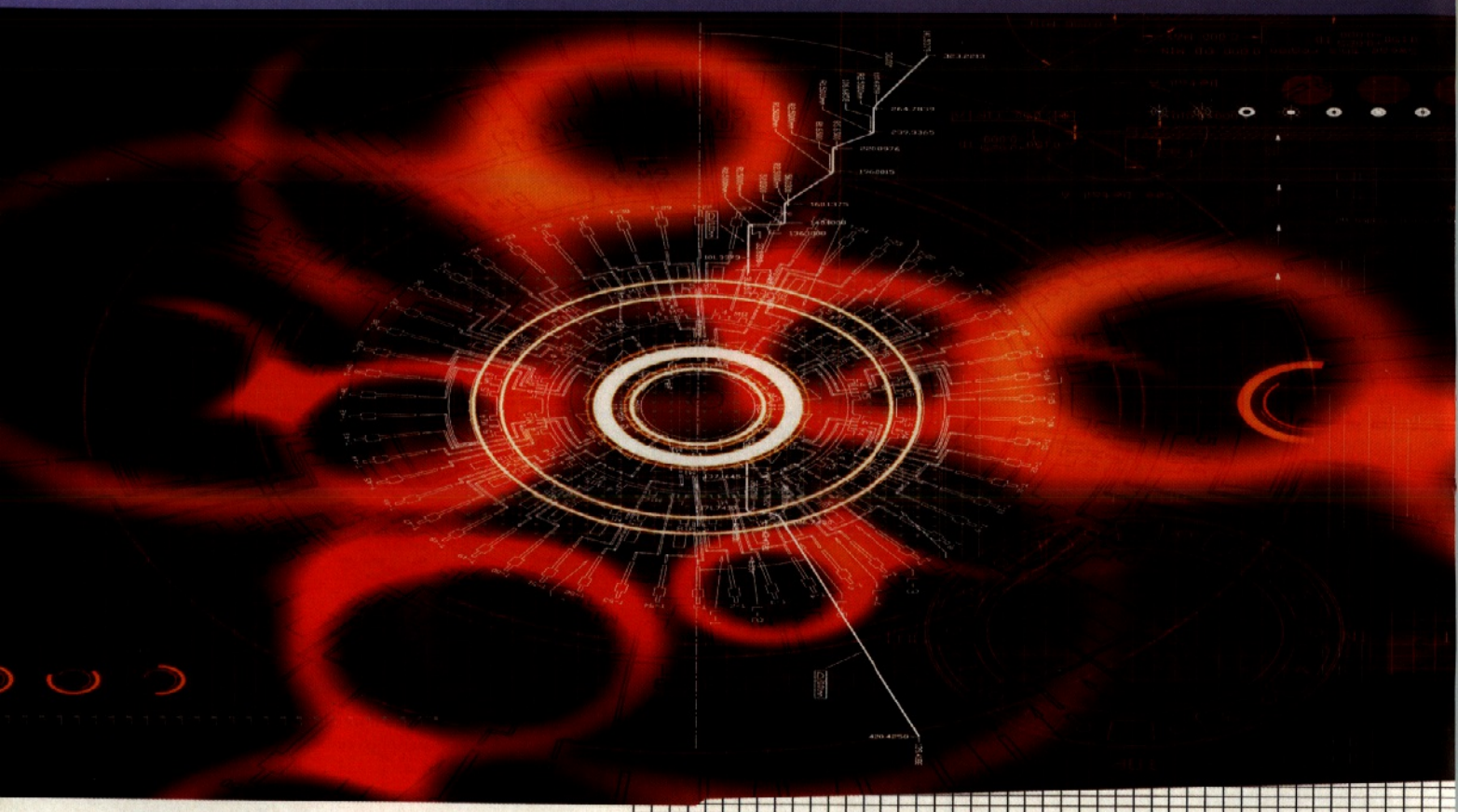
Program: PGPfreeware
URL: www.pgp.com
Licence: Free
PGPfreeware is one of the most popular methods of encrypting emails. After the encryption has taken place, you can rest assured they can't be read or tampered with by unauthorised snoopers.



Program: Multiproxy
URL: www.multiproxy.org
Licence: Freeware
This utility is a multifunctional personal proxy server. Sounds complicated? All it means is that Multiproxy works by hiding your Web browser, personal details and IP address while you browse the Web.



Program: Windows File Shredder
URL: www.mazepath.com
Licence: Shareware, $14
Deleted files are never really deleted and can still be recovered by hackers and snoopers. That is unless Windows File Shredder has got to work by overwriting them seven times. This is truly a military strength utility.



ON THE CD

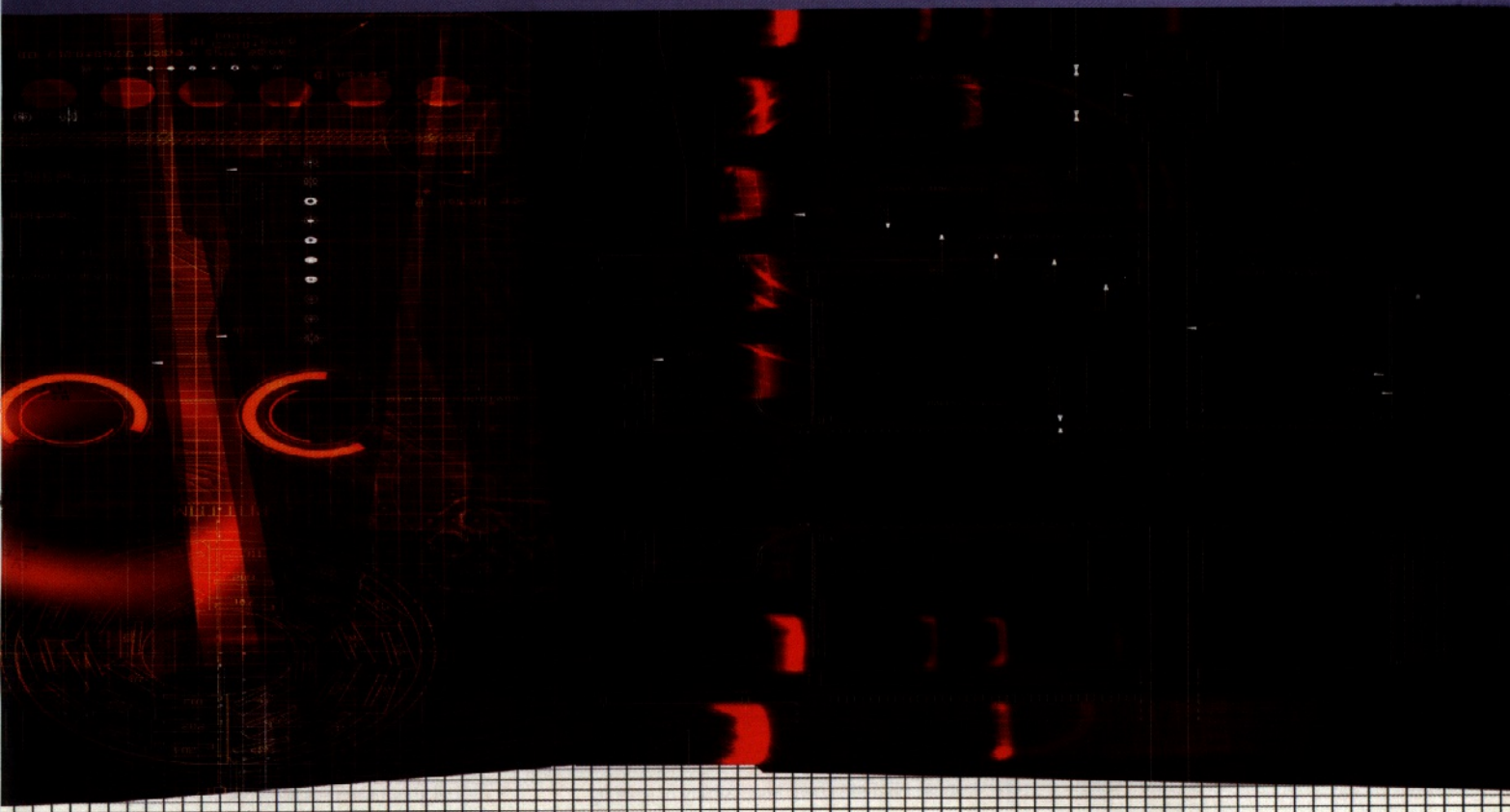
Kill all known viruses dead

VIRUSES MAY BE GETTING STRONGER AND STRONGER ALL THE TIME, BUT AS **THOMAS WATSON** EXPLAINS, IT'S NOT THAT DIFFICULT TO KEEP YOUR SYSTEM CLEAN AS A WHISTLE

There are a select few things you can always be sure of in life. The Scotland football team will never parade the World Cup through the streets of Glasgow, for example. Likewise, your dazzlingly new and expensive PC will be next to worthless within a year, no matter how well you take care of it.

Even more fundamental than any of this, though, is the simple fact that a virus attacking your computer spells serious danger for you. Letting even a 'minor' virus loose on your system can quickly lead to some bad, bad things happening [*surely not worse than Scotland winning the world cup? – Ed*].

Unfortunately, the latest strains of viral PC infection are more intrusive and pervasive than ever before. Thankfully, you have a huge arsenal of weapons at your disposal to ensure these deadly pests never darken your door again. So read on for a full rundown on everything you need to know about viruses – how the hell they work, which are the most dangerous and, most importantly of all, how to rid your computer of the menace of a particularly vicious and tenacious bug.



Bad bad bad BadTrans

Any outbreak of a particularly virulent PC virus has always been an important event in the techie newsreel, but recent bug attacks have entered into mainstream media reporting. Okay, you can't deny that there are more PC owners than ever before, placing a greater number of people under the 'at risk' umbrella. But this is not the sole reason that viruses like 'I love you' penetrated into common parlance, becoming household terms for their short, but deadly, lives.

The rise in interest also stems from the development of viruses over the past couple of years. From the basic bugs of a short while ago, we've now progressed to the dubiously impressive BadTrans.b and Nimda strains. And as viruses become ever stronger, the likelihood of keeping clean by your wits alone dwindles.

The difference isn't only in strength either, and the most current bugs use a variety of stealth techniques to worm their way onto your system. To explain how these new irritants work, it's worth taking a quick look back into the recesses of time to see the methods traditional bugs have used to wreak their havoc.

Most viruses are created using Visual Basic, a macro generating programming language incorporated into virtually every large Microsoft package. This language, designed to automate many of the more boring tasks in creating documents, was quickly assimilated by virus makers who recognised the potential of this ubiquitous language for spreading their malicious code amongst the masses.

It is this use of Visual Basic that puts users of Outlook Express at particular risk, but people could generally intercept a virus manually before it destroyed a whole system. An infected attachment script has for years now been 'disguised' as an innocent JPEG or other such file. Wary users could easily spot a virus a mile off by the fact that the file name contained an extra three letters at the end. **'Practical.jpg.vbs'**, for example, should point out to you that the file in question isn't a JPEG at all, but rather a Visual Basic script. And, as people don't tend to send these scripts between their mates, it's safe to assume that you're dealing with a virus. The advice, therefore, is simple – don't open dodgy attachments.

The two main ways of scanning your PC for viruses are tooling yourself up with software or running an online scan

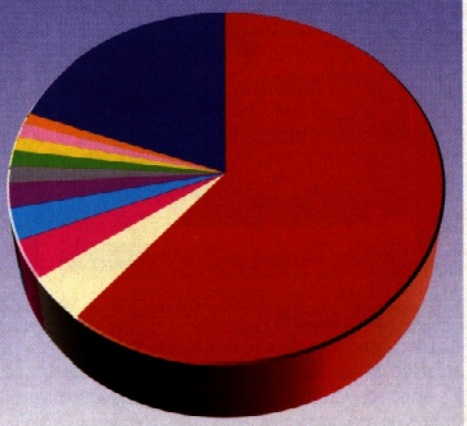
Welcome to My Party

DISCOVERED AT THE end of January, the MyParty virus is an example of the guile and sheer cheek of hackers. Purporting to be an email from a mate telling you about pictures from a recent party, the message contains what looks like a link to the Web address **'www.myparty.yahoo.com'**. However, this isn't a link at all, and is in fact a **'.com'** file designed to wreak havoc on your system. You'd be amazed at how many people will immediately accept that an attachment is actually a Web link, especially when it ends in the all important **'.com'**.

The most dangerous viruses of 2002 – so far

The most dangerous viruses of January 2002, according to Sophos (**www.sophos.com**)

1.	**Badtrans-B (Badtrans variant)**	**61.1%**
2.	**MyParty-A (My Party)**	**4.3%**
3.	**Magistr-B (Magistr variant)**	**3.6%**
4.	**Sircam-A (Sircam)**	**2.9%**
5.	**Nimda-A (Nimda)**	**2.3%**
6.	**Maldal-G (Maldal variant)**	**1.6%**
7.	**Magistr-A (Magistr)**	**1.4%**
8.	**Gokar-A (Gokar)**	**1.3%**
9.	**Klez-E (Klez variant)**	**1.3%**
10.	**Nimda-D (Nimda variant)**	**1.0%**
11.	**Others**	**19.2%**



Note: The colours in the percentages field correspond with the same coloured segments of the pie chart above

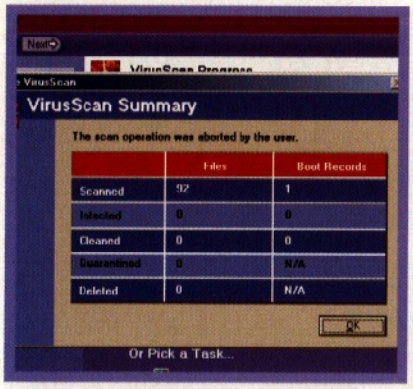
Scanning with McAfee

1 The main interface

Once you've installed the trial version of McAfee's VirusScan from our cover CD, you'll be presented with this screen. There are many options here, but the quickest and easiest is the 'Scan for viruses now' button.

2 Select a location

You'll be asked for a location to scan. Leaving the selection on 'My Computer' means that VirusScan will scan everything currently attached to your PC for viruses – giving you the most complete check. Click 'Scan'.



3 The scan

VirusScan will check through all of the selected drives and locations for viruses. Once it's finished, you'll see the above screen, which gives you a rundown of all the files checked, along with any viruses that were found.

Superbad BadTrans

This was all blown out of the water last year with the two most devastating viruses the world has seen. The Nimda virus was the first virus that could physically damage other files on your hard drive, as opposed to simply replicating itself exponentially. More importantly, however, Nimda marked a shift upwards in the intelligence of viruses. If you were unlucky to receive the Nimda bug while using Outlook or Outlook Express, you didn't have to open the attachment to be infected. Simply opening the email containing the evil attachment with was enough to set a train of horror in motion. Outlook Express users could even be infected if the email was shown in the preview pane.

Fair enough, you might think. Turn the preview pane off in Outlook Express, and make sure that you don't read messages that look like they might have come from a suspicious source. Apart from the sheer impossibility of ignoring messages from all but your closest contacts, the very nature of email viruses completely negates this principle. Any virus worth its salt will automatically send itself to all the addresses it finds within the email client of a 'host'. Therefore, the weapon of destruction will be clothed in a bog-standard message from your mate, promising to show you the latest seedy shots of tennis starlets or whatever is doing the rounds.

THE ADVICE IS SIMPLE – DON'T OPEN DODGY EMAIL ATTACHMENTS

The upshot of all this is that you can no longer guarantee your own safety with a vigilant eye and a fierce hatred for all things virus-related. Alas, you're going to have to call in the big boys – the anti-virus programs that will look after your system's integrity, and prevent any unwelcome guest arriving at your door uninvited.

The big two

For more years than many people would care to remember, there have been two main players in the world of virus protection. And like so many other duopoly situations in the world, this rivalry has spelt out significant benefits for the punter keen to rid his PC of bugs and Trojans. McAfee and Symantec have been trading blows for years, and it's fair to say that whenever one gains an advantage, the other is rarely slow to catch up and expand on any improvements.

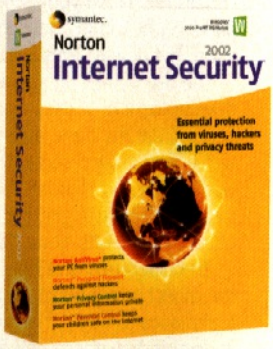
McAfee's (**www.mcafee.com**) latest release in the lucrative anti-virus market is VirusScan Professional. Retailing at around £40, this is as comprehensive a virus program as you could hope to have at your disposal, and promises to run a gamut of tests every time you connect to the Net. Key to the power of VirusScan is its ability to protect you at all entry points to the Net. Whether you are downloading from the Web, or accessing your email account, VirusScan should protect you.

This package will also prevent you suffering at the hands of rogue browser plug-ins. If you've ever 'accidentally' found yourself visiting a particularly dubious site, you may have seen the pop-up screen appear asking you to install and run a particular ActiveX plug-in. It happened to, ahem, a friend of *Practical Internet's* recently, and the plug-in turned out to be the decidedly unpleasant 'Magistr' virus. What's more, most sites won't even ask before installing ActiveX plug-ins on your PC. Which is why McAfee's suite could save your life.

It's all about unique selling points, though, and VirusScan Pro is currently the only big package that offers a built-in firewall for protection both ways. This is taken a step further by the inclusion of PDA synchronisation virus scanning, ensuring you don't accidentally infect your PC by attaching it to an unclean device.

On the other hand...

No mention of McAfee VirusScan would be complete without at least a passing nod to Norton AntiVirus, and the latest incarnation of Symantec's (**www.symantec.com**) flagship product abounds with innovative new features and virus busting technologies. The jewels in the Symantec crown are three highly impressive utilities to safeguard your machine like never before.



Norton's stupendous AntiVirus program is part of Internet Security

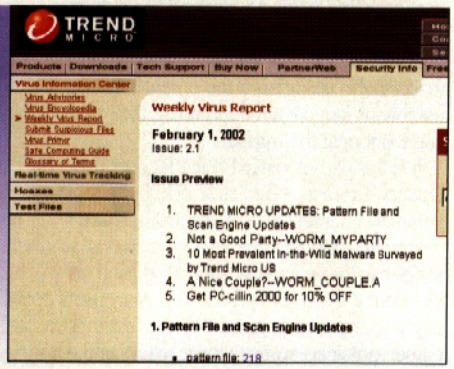
First of all, Norton promises to intercept and remove viruses from your system with no interruption to your PC activity. This no-show policy means you're going to have to trust the program implicitly to do the job no matter what – thankfully Norton has the

Find out more...

Trend Micro

www.antivirus.com

YOU CAN ACCESS all manner of virus-related info, as well as a handy online scanning facility to keep you clean. Much of the site is dedicated to trying to cajole you to part with cash for Trend's software, but there's enough here to keep you coming back. We particularly like the test file, which allows you to make sure your anti-virus program is working fine.



Find out more...

Sophos
www.sophos.com
ONE OF THE larger virus scanners, Sophos also boasts a fairly comprehensive site devoted to the art of busting bugs. The section explaining hoaxes and virus is particularly useful for anyone wishing to keep abreast of latest developments.

reputation to carry this off, though. Another boon is the way that this package automatically checks all outgoing emails for virus content – meaning that when a macro bug starts sending infected messages to everyone you know, AntiVirus won't allow them through.

What makes AntiVirus a surefire winner, though, is the 'Script-based' blocking technique it uses. This system allows the package to detect brand spanking new bugs – even before virus patches have been created to combat them.

This raises another of the important issues surrounding virus detection. Loads of punters pick up an anti-virus program, install it, then leave it festering on their hard drive and expect it to perform miracles on a regular basis. Alas, most anti-virus packages simply don't work like this. Every new bug that appears has been carefully planned and built for maximum destruction by dedicated hackers. The effect of this is that each new strain differs in some way from previous viruses. The upshot of this is that your anti-virus program has little chance of blasting it out of the ether.

A good anti-virus tool will offer you regular updates and patches to the program. Most of the time, the manufacturers have to play catch-up, providing updates as soon as a new virus is launched, in an attempt to prevent the bug from ever reaching you. This puts the onus on you, however, as these patches are not installed automatically. And this is where so many of you are let down. If you don't make the effort to download updates to your virus protection software, you might as well just uninstall it and replace it with a smiley face screensaver, as the program will be next to useless.

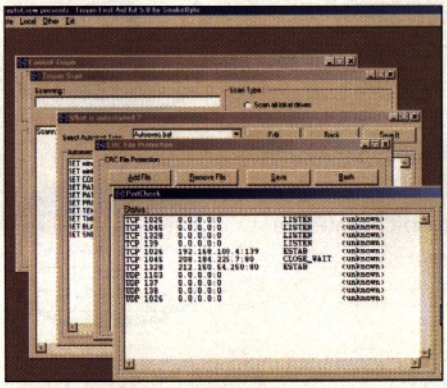
Free your mind

Don't have the inclination or funds to shell out £40 on an anti-virus program? Too busy spending your hard-earned on high cost broadband connections? Worry not, for there are plenty of free options to keep you safe and your hands in your pockets.

VCatch Virus Catcher (on the CD), offers a range of features that belie its freeware status. The basic premise is that the package checks every file sent or downloaded to your PC for viruses, and instantly deletes anything with viral tendencies – relaying an alert to you at the same time. One of the major bonuses of this freeware utility, though, is the fact that it automatically updates itself every day over the Web, ensuring that you always have the latest virus-busting technology at your disposal.

Most other freeware efforts tend to concentrate on one particular aspect of virus checking. Trojans First Aid Kit, you won't be surprised to learn, deals exclusively with the discovery and removal of Trojan Horse programs. Considering these can be the most devastating of all bugs, it's always worth keeping this particular tool handy in your Start menu. You can find First Aid Kit on the CD.

Dr Web (also on the CD) requires a little more work from you to kill those viruses, and we'd only really recommend it to the more advanced users out there. Getting Dr Web to work requires attaching kernels into other program interfaces and



There's nothing wooden about Trojans First Aid Kit, it'll make short work of Trojan viruses

12 months of virus hell

November 2001
Badtrans.b
An update of the original Badtrans virus, this email bug quickly became notorious for its ability to infect user's PCs by merely viewing the message in the preview pane.

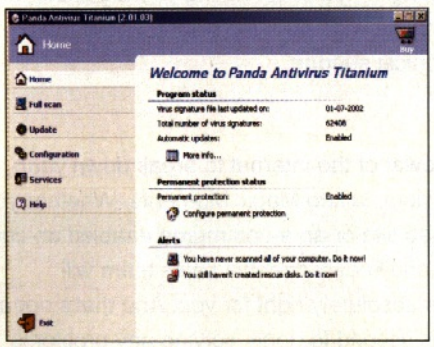
November 2001
Aliz
One of the smallest bugs on the go at the moment at only 4Kb, Aliz runs riot on your system, choosing its enticement message from a list of possibles. Aliz only works on users with pre-patch versions of Internet Explorer 5.01 or 5.5.

September 2001
Nimda
One of the most devastating viruses ever, Nimda was only kept off the front pages by the after effects of the September 11 attacks. The attachment, '**README.EXE**', is automatically opened when you open the email it comes with.

March 2001
Magistr
The Magistr can lie dormant on your PC for some months before attacking your system with all of its might. A particularly deadly virus, owing to its ability to overwrite vital BIOS functions. Catch this, and say goodbye to your system once and for all.

March 2001
NakedWife
Luring unsuspecting punters into opening an apparent Flash movie of a naked lady, this is a prime example of a virus using supposed sex rewards to entice punters.

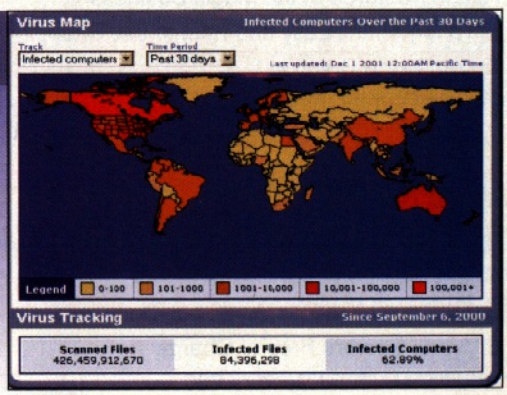
February 2001
Anna Kournikova
Another 'click this and you'll see some nudity' virus, the Anna Kournikova bug quickly became one of the most famous the world has seen.



Although the Panda isn't known for its killer instincts, Panda Antivirus Titanium can make mincemeat out of viruses

Mapping viruses

OKAY, SO IT might not be as useful as an online virus scanner, but the Virus Map on McAfee's site (**www.mcafee.com**) is well worth a look. Basically, it shows you the current penetration of viruses according to region. The map works from a pretty large database – when we visited, the figures were collated from some 426 billion scanned files.



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If you want to use the power of the internet to break down your own communication barriers, talk to Magic Moments. Whether you are planning a simple web site or an e-commerce enabled on-line application, our friendly and knowledgeable sales team will provide a solution that is absolutely right for you. And that's not all. Our after sales service is second to none, solving any problems you may encounter.

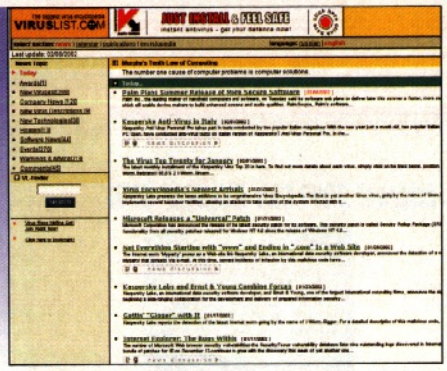
Prices exclude VAT @ 17.5%

Find out more...

Viruslist.com

www.virustlist.com

FORGET THE HARD sell you usually expect to find on these sites, and instead look forward to a staggering number of virus facts and figures. In fact, a visit here every day will keep you on top of viruses, with its mix of news, descriptions and comment.

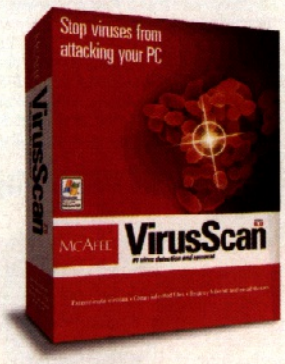


files, and might just prove too much for the inexperienced PC user. Unfortunately, Dr Web doesn't actually remove any viruses for you, so you're going to have to turn elsewhere in the long run anyway.

Online tools

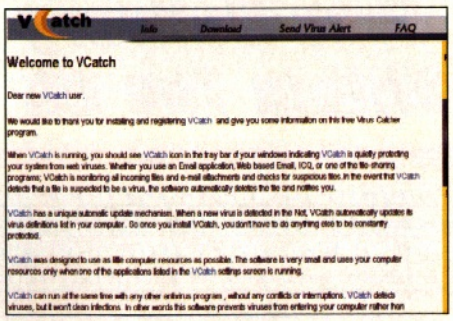
Last year, we couldn't move for the barrage of online virus checkers being thrown at us. After a bit of a shake-up, only a select few remain, and even fewer that offer their services for nowt. Easily the best in the field is Panda's 'ActiveScan'. Completely free, it uses the award-winning Panda anti-virus technology, as seen in the Platinum and Titanium versions of the prepackaged software. Promising to catch and disinfect some 62,000 viruses, this really is the only free online tool that nearly matches the power of a software tool.

Apart from the fact that you don't have to clog up your system with space-hogging and bloated software, this online scanner also ensures that your PC is protected from the latest attacks. Panda promises to update its virus database on a daily basis, which should prevent you falling unduly behind.



McAfee has long been a leader in the anti-virus market, and VirusScan proves why

The major drawback with even the best online service is the purely reactive nature of the operation. It's nigh on impossible for one of these tools to catch a virus until you've downloaded it onto your system. Relying solely on an online service therefore places you at far higher risk of being caught out by a particularly nippy virus.



Try out the version of VCatch from the cover CD and give viruses the big heave-ho

If you don't mind paying for it, the astoundingly comprehensive McAfee VirusScan Online will do you a turn. Costing around £25 a year, this is basically everything you'd find in the soft version of the package, available to you in a handy online format. Again, you can also be sure that your virus protection is as up-to-date as possible.

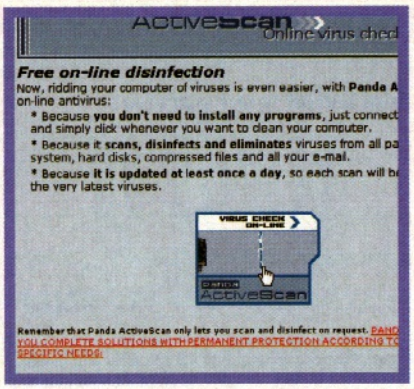
The next best option as far as freebies go is the Anti-Virus service offered at PCPitStop (**www.pcpitstop.com**). In case you didn't know, PCPitStop has a whole suite of online utilities designed to ensure that your PC stays in peak condition. Bizarrely, though, the anti-virus tool here is a seriously cut-down version of the tool you'd find on the Panda site. Instead of the 62,000 or so viruses Panda promises to protect you from, PCPitStop uses the Panda technology to protect you from the top 200 most dangerous viruses at any particular moment in time. The only real advantage we can see with this is that you should be looking at a vastly quicker checking procedure, giving you more time to get on with the finer things in life. And after all, virus busting is supposed to be a means to an end. There's little point in spending every waking moment on the virus detection job, as you simply won't have any time to enjoy the more exciting aspects of the Net.

Five virus busting tips

FIVE COMMON SENSE WAYS TO AVOID THE PITFALLS OF A VIRUS ATTACK

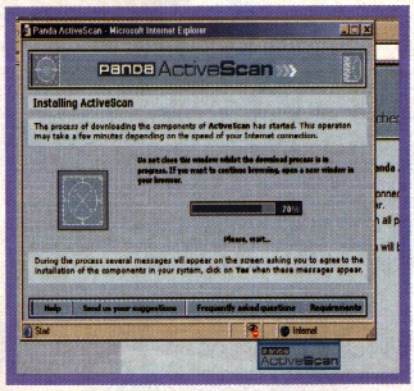
- Update your virus program regularly to make sure that it can defend you against the most recent attacks
- Be very wary of unusual attachments in emails. Even if the file looks like a JPEG, check for the tell-tale 'vbs' extension
- Don't blindly accept all browser plug-ins. Browser extensions are the easiest way for virus writers to snare gullible punters
- Don't open any emails that look dodgy, even if they appear to have come from a friend. Email viruses work by sending themselves from a victim's client to all the addresses on the contact list
- Get your hands on a good anti-virus program. Even if you've got to pay for it, you'll reap the benefits in the long run

GET FREE Viruses scans online



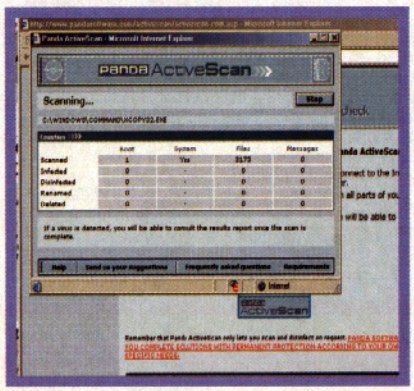
1 Start the process

Fire up your Web browser and go to **www.pandasoftware.co.uk**, then click on the 'Online virus scanner' icon towards the bottom of the page. Click on the same button in the next screen to start the process.



2 Register and download

Before you can start your online virus check, there are a couple of things to do. First of all, enter your email address when prompted, then download the ActiveScan file to your PC. This should only take a couple of minutes, and is vital to the process.



3 The scan

Choose what needs to be scanned by Panda by clicking the appropriate button. Panda will then scan through your files, searching for and eliminating any viruses you may have. This might take a while, so sit back and relax.

www.beststuff.co.uk™

BestStuff sell loads of things, but they all have something in common, they are all the best in their particular category, here are some examples of what we mean:

Cam Master 4 in 1 Web Cam

£79.00

The Cam Master is a perfectly good web cam with a USB interface. Where it excels is that it does other things too. It's stylish, sort of pen-like, and easily portable and apart from being a web cam it is a voice recorder, a still digital camera and it can also record up to 98 seconds of video.

Internet Alert Call Manager 4000

£40.00

The Internet Alert puts you back in control of your Internet connection. It sits between your computer and the phone socket and monitors what is going on. If someone tries to phone while you are surfing the Internet Alert Call Manager 4000 lets you know by bleeping and flashing. Not only that, but with Caller ID enabled, the Internet Alert Call Manager 4000 will even tell you who is on the other end of the line before you answer

Kinyo SW-7352 Multimedia Speakers

£35.00

For the games player especially, these are brilliant, with a sub woofer included it might seem like they were inside the game! The Kinyo SW-7352 Multimedia Speakers are magnetically shielded and designed to work with personal computers, portable CD players, MP3 players and musical keyboards. They are designed to give a powerful, clear and distortion free sound while still not taking up too much space.

Koss SB40 Computer Communication Headphones

£49.00

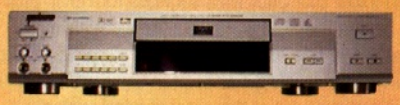
The best rated headphones for playing games on-line. These Koss SB40 computer headphones have a dynamic microphone so you can communicate directly from your PC hands free. Not only perfect for games players but also for people using voice activated or voice recognition software or web phone systems.

Pulsar 3000 Wireless Speakers

£99.00

The Pulsar 3000 speakers are among the most sophisticated RF/FM wireless speakers available with RF (UHF) wireless transmission, wide transmission coverage (up to 100 metres), automatic level control which prevents volume overloading and Ymersion 3D Surround Sound. Great for multimedia, as TV rear Surround Sound speakers or just spreading the Hi-fi sound around the home. With no speaker wire they are extremely practical and they look sensational.

Prima DVD650 Multi Region DVD Player



£185.00

This multi region DVD Player does more than most - apart from DVDs from all six regions it also plays: Audio CDs, MP3 CDs, Video CDs, Super Video CDs, CD-R, CD-RW, HDCD, CD-DA and CD-I Format discs. If that wasn't enough it has a built in Dolby Digital Decoder, supports DTS, and has a Karaoke function - with features such as a Digital multi level key control, a Digital multi level echo control, mixed sound effect: single sound channel, stereo output and 2 microphone inputs. This has been our best selling DVD Player throughout 2001.

AV Hub Plus

£45.00

Not enough Scart sockets for all your AV things? The AV Hub Plus has four Scart sockets - they are labelled "Satellite, DVD, VCR and TV", but of course you can connect anything you like to them. Also you have 3 phono out sockets and three phono inputs, useful for plugging in a camcorder or games console. There are loads of applications - tape from one video recorder to another. Tape from DVD or camcorder. Ideal for use with ITV Digital, cable TV boxes and Satellite TV. Works even if the TV has only one Scart socket! Comes with its own remote control.

Philex MPress3 64MB MP3 Player

£99.00

Download music from the Internet and use this thing to listen to it. The MPress is shockproof, digital and portable. This means it plays digital quality sound, even when you are exercising (joggers love it). You can decide which songs you include, and you can store them in the memory. Memory is made up of 32MB embedded flash memory and 32MB in the form of a removable SmartMedia card making 64MB in total. We supply the SmartMedia card which is a Samsung branded card. With all this you can make up your own albums and include any artists you choose.

Napa DAV316 MP3 CD Player

£99.00

Ordinary music CDs you know about. MP3 CDs you can make yourself by using a PC CD writer to transfer MP3 sound files to a CD. The benefit is that you can hold hours and hours of music on one CD. CDR and CDRW are CDs that you've made yourself, and no, not every CD player will play them, but Napa will. It also has a built in rechargeable battery, you get a massive 120 seconds anti shock with MP3 CDs and 40 seconds anti shock with audio CDs and it supports ID tagging. The only thing we don't like is the awful headphones so we're giving a free pair of "The Plug" Earbuds from Koss worth £19.00 with every Napa.

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- DEHUMIDIFIER
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Web Browsing: p58-69

Searching the Web can be an arduous experience. If you don't know the ins and outs of your search engine, you'll be up the creek without a paddle. Google is the best search engine in the world, and our guide shows you how to get the best from this fantastic searching device.

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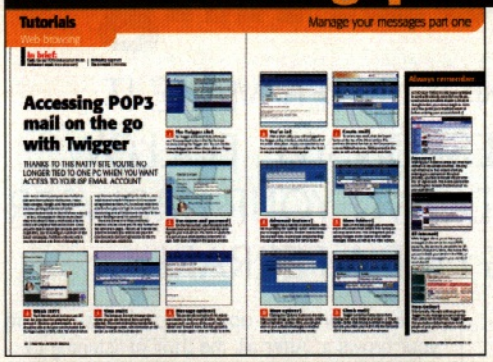
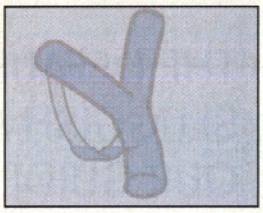
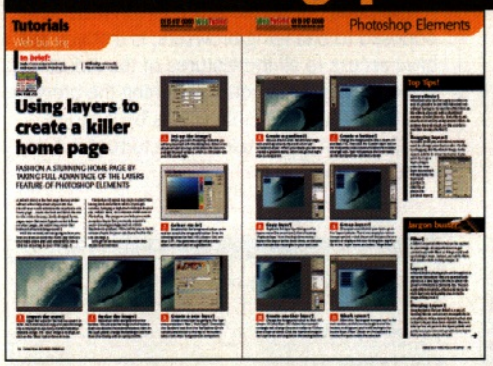




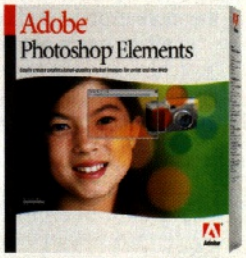
Picking up email from your ISP account has always required you to be sat at your home machine. Well, this is no longer the case. With the help of the highly intuitive Twigger site, you can now pick up and send messages from any POP3 account in the UK.

Web building: p88-99

IN ASSOCIATION WITH WebFusion
CONTACT SALES ON 0115 917 8000 OR VISIT WWW.WEBFUSION.CO.UK



Rather than using lots of different programs to build Web pages, why not use the built-in features of Photoshop Elements to layer up your own dazzling home page? We show you how in our four page guide.



Welcome...

SEARCHING ON THE Web can be an arduous task if you don't know your way around. We show you how to get the best out of Google and WebFerret to ensure you always get great results.

Check out the Yahoo! Messenger tutorial also, for advice on mastering our favourite Instant Messaging client. And if you have loads of accounts on different IMs, why not try Trillian, which will combine 'em all into one handy package. This is part of our 'Messages on the move' project, where we'll show people who live their lives on the go how to pick up emails in all kinds of useful ways.

Thomas Watson, Technical Editor

In brief:

Task: Strip down IE6 for faster surfing
Software I need: Internet Explorer 6
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 20 minutes

ON THE CD

Strip Internet Explorer 6 down for fast surfing

THE DEFAULT SETTTINGS IN IE6 MAKE IT SLUGGISH AND UNRESPONSIVE. FOLLOW OUR GUIDE TO SLIM DOWN YOUR BROWSER AND GET IT PURRING LIKE A FERRARI

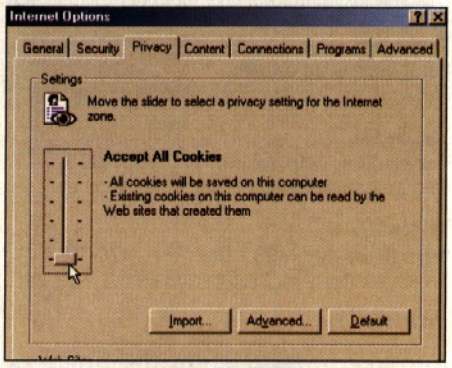
INTERNET EXPLORER 6 might be the best browser ever produced by Bill Gates' army, but it's far from perfect. Many of the features you find pre-installed are designed for the beginner sector of the market. Although these functions improve the intuitiveness and ease of use of Internet Explorer, they are pretty redundant to the more experienced user.

In effect, much of Internet Explorer can be 'switched off' for a faster, more streamlined browser. The key here is knowing what you need and what can be discarded from the IE6 toolkit, ensuring the optimum performance from your browser. After all, the thrill of listening to hideous MIDI sounds on a Web site soon loses its appeal, and should really be turned off as quickly as possible.

The bonus of tweaking IE6 to run faster, as opposed to changing browsers, is that you still have access to all the features of the industry standard Web browser. Fine-tuning the program to work in your best interests is becoming a necessity for power users keen to root out any needless junk.

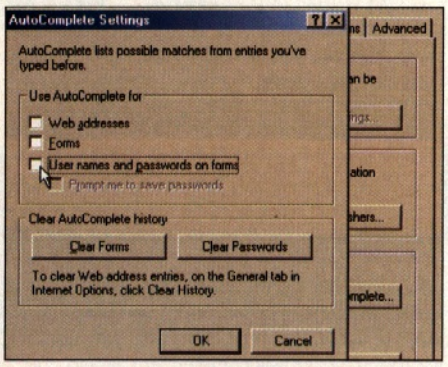
1 No home page

The first step to a faster browser is simple. Open up IE, then go to 'Tools', 'Internet Options'. In this first screen, click the 'Use blank' button in the Home page section. This ensures you don't have to wait for a page to load when you start up IE.



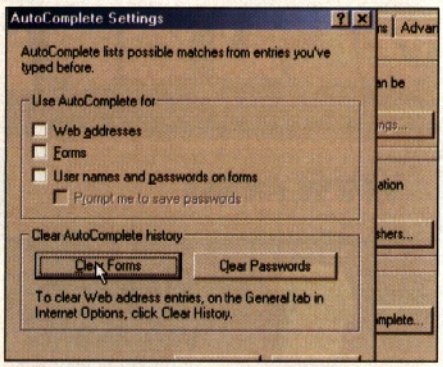
2 Accept all cookies

For ultra speedy browsing, it's best to allow all cookies to pass without interruption onto your PC. This low security option might be risky, but it ensures your preferences are stored for all the sites you visit. Find this under the 'Privacy' tab.



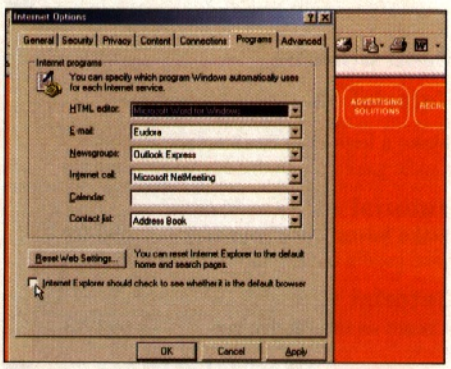
3 No AutoComplete

AutoComplete might be okay for filling in forms, but as it takes up valuable cache space, it's best to get rid of it. Go to the 'Content' tab, then choose 'AutoComplete' from the options. Untick all three main boxes on this page.



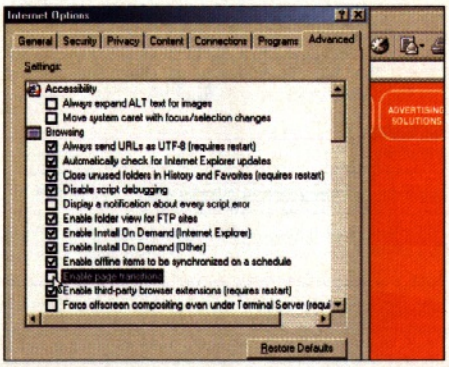
4 Clear off

There's little point in turning the AutoComplete function off if you're going to leave the memory-sapping cache files on your machine. Get rid of these by clicking on the 'Clear forms' and 'Clear passwords' buttons in turn.



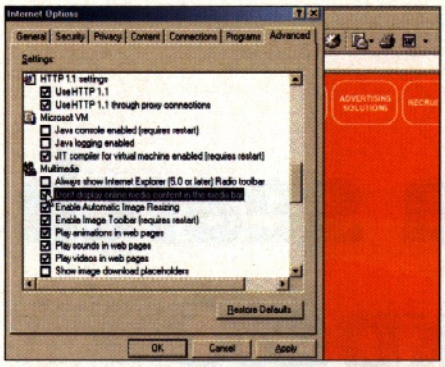
5 Default browser?

One of the most useless elements in IE6 is its ability to check that it's the default browser. To rid yourself of this time-wasting excursion, click on the 'Programs' tab, then untick the box at the bottom of the page.



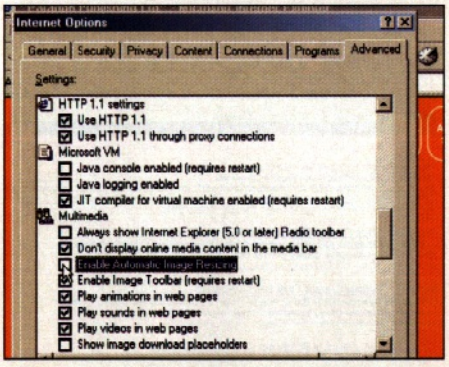
6 Kill page transitions

The 'Advanced' section houses most of the options we need to tame the excesses of IE, so click on this tab. The first option to turn off is 'Enable page transitions', which prevents any animations between pages cropping up.



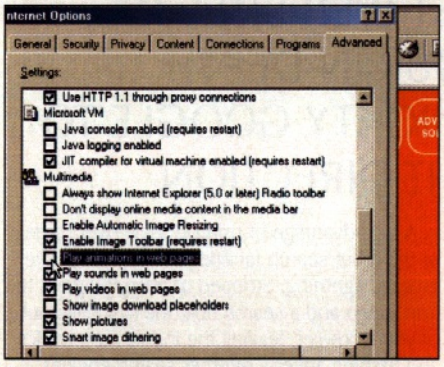
7 Disable the media bar

We firmly believe that media content should be played in a media player, which makes the IE6 media bar redundant. To rid yourself of this RAM stealer, move down the advanced options list, then tick the 'Don't display online media content...'.



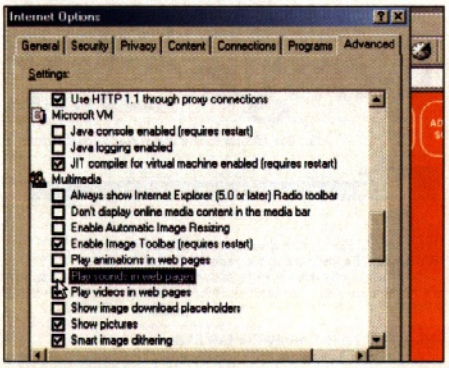
8 Auto image resizing

It's time-consuming and it's irritating, but Microsoft keeps trumpeting its automatic image resizing feature. Unless you want to wait an extra few seconds for any decent-sized image to download, turn this function off.



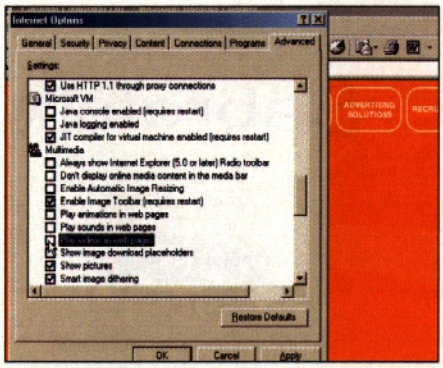
9 Destroy animations

Animated GIFs might seem a good idea, but more often than not, they are nothing but sneaky banner ads. And let's face it, who wants to wait for a page to load because of an advert? Untick the 'Play animations' box to rid yourself of these parasites.



10 Banish sounds

Even more irritating than animations are site sounds. Unless you have a penchant for grating MIDI renditions of your favourite songs, or waiting 15 minutes for a tune to download, get rid of this by unticking the 'Play sounds' box.

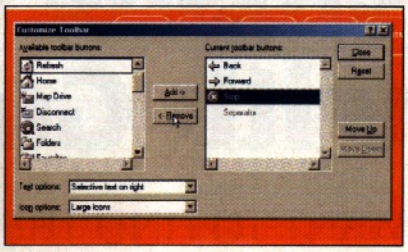


11 Eliminate videos

It's infuriating when you come across a page that automatically starts streaming video. The best way to deal with this is to turn the video option off. Unticking the 'Play videos' box will prevent huge video files downloading to your PC.

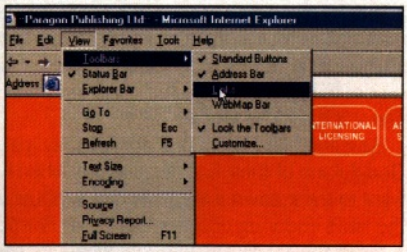
Toolbar tweaks

AS WELL AS turning off the most irritating Web elements, there are other ways of fine-tuning IE6 to work more efficiently. One of the easiest methods is to customise the toolbar to contain only the features you want to see. This 'minimal browsing' relies on you learning a few keyboard shortcuts, but will make a significant difference to the way you browse the Internet.



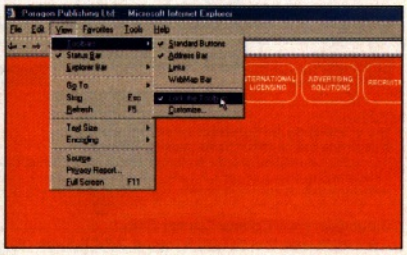
Customise

The first step to sorting out the bloated IE6 interface is to go to the Customise section. Find this by going to 'View', 'Toolbars' then 'Customise'. Remove items from the toolbar by clicking on the relevant button. Get rid of everything apart from 'Back' and 'Forward'.



More customisation

Before applying the changes, alter the 'Text options' to 'No text labels', then change the 'Icon options' to 'Small icons'. Click 'Close', then go to the 'View' menu and choose 'Toolbars'. Click the 'Links' icon to untick this option.



The new toolbar

Unlock the toolbars from the Toolbar menu. This allows you to move the Address bar to the same line as the smaller icon toolbar. When finished, lock the toolbars again, and enjoy your uncluttered browser window.

In brief:

Task: Become a search engine expert
Software I need: None
Difficulty: Beginner
Time I need: As long as you want

See our Site Test feature on page 36 for more on search engines!

Become a search engine expert with Google.com

WANT TO FIND THE BEST WEB SITES IN SECONDS? THEN USE OUR IN-DEPTH BREAKDOWN OF THE MIGHTY GOOGLE TO POINT YOU IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

IF THERE'S ONE thing Internet users value above anything else, it's the ability to find the information they want quickly. Although there's a whole host of powerful searching sites, there's no doubt in our minds, which one to turn to first – it has to be Google.

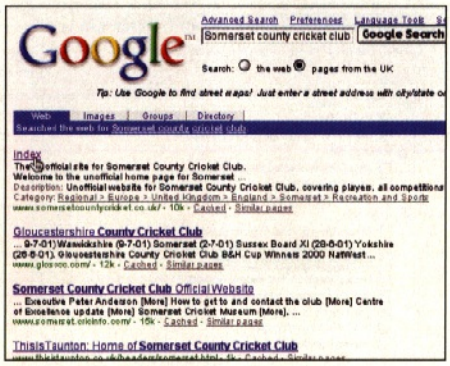
Seasoned Net users probably already make Google one of their first destinations when they want to track down a Web site. It's a tribute to the site's enduring qualities that we at *Practical Internet* towers always turn to it when we need to locate the most obscure information.

A big advantage of using Google over some of the other search facilities is that it loads like greased lightning. Stripped of everything but the firm's logo and a search box, the site leaps out of your browser, leaving the indulgent graphics and flashing adverts of other search engines firmly in the shade.

Benefiting from a clear layout that all but eschews adverts in favour of delivering raw information, Google has plenty of features that will make your life easier. Allow us to introduce you to them.

1 Start searching

To start searching, type **www.google.co.uk** into your browser. You can visit **www.google.com** if you like, but the UK version defaults to a UK-specific search. Now type a keyword or words into the search box and hit 'Return' again.



2 Viewing results

Our search for Somerset Cricket has yielded an impressive number of results. Click the large underlined title link to visit any of the Web sites returned as results. The blue bar at the top of the page tells you how long each search took.

3 Extra features

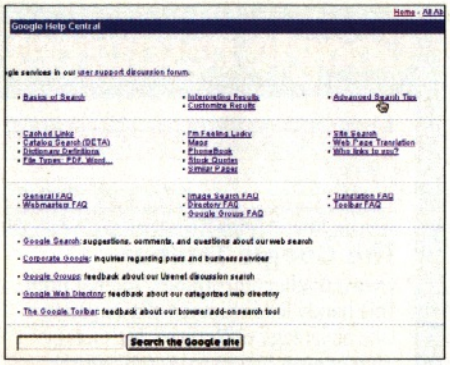
One invaluable feature is the ability to access the Google cache. This contains Web sites that Google has harvested to store on its servers and gives you the opportunity to browse recent versions of unavailable Web sites.

4 Cached for questions

The best thing about browsing cached sites is that Google automatically highlights your search terms in bright colours – a real boon when searching through text-heavy pages. Click 'Current Page' link to see the most recent version of the page.

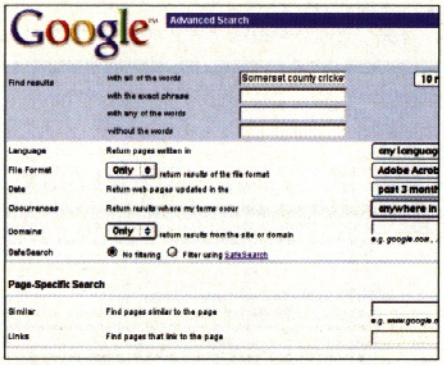
5 Meet the relations

Another handy feature that can be accessed from Google's search results page is the ability to hunt for Web sites of a similar ilk. You just have to click on the 'Similar Pages' link to refine your search.



6 Read the Help file

It's easy to assume that all search engines are the same, but they aren't. To get to grips with how Google works you'll need to visit and read the site's help files (accessed by clicking on the 'Search Tips' link at the top of the results page.)



7 Super searching

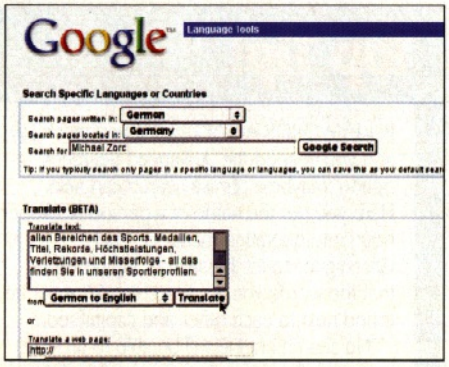
Want to further refine your search? Click the 'Advanced Search' link to define how many results you want returned, what type of document you are looking for and whether you want your results filtered for obscene material.

8 What's your preference?

If you don't mind allowing your browser to accept cookies, you can take advantage of the 'Preferences' feature. This lets you save details of how to conduct searches, so that whenever you use Google, it keeps with this format.

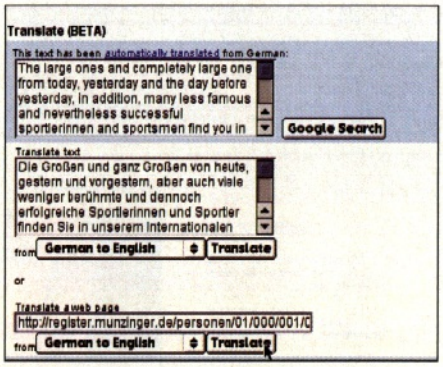
9 Search in tongues

Cunning linguists can use Google to hunt for Web sites in different languages by clicking the 'Language Tools' link at the top of the search results page. The next page lets you define a search term and choose a language.



10 Translate text

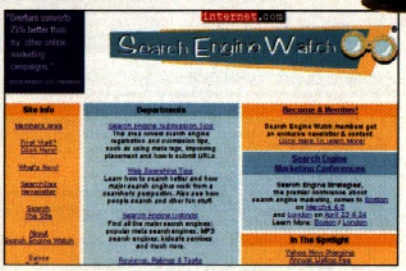
Another excellent feature of Google's Language Tools is the ability to translate text from a foreign Web site. Just cut and paste the text from a Web site into this box, decide how you want it to be translated and then hit the 'Translate' button.



11 Translate whole sites

You can use the box at the bottom to decipher entire pages. Just enter the URL, set the languages and click 'Translate'. The results won't be perfect, but you should get an idea of what your chosen text actually means in English.

Web resources



Search Engine Watch

www.searchenginewatch.com

It may sound like a search engine snitching service, but Search Engine Watch actually contains all the information you could possibly want to know about getting the best out of search engines, along with some info you didn't need to know too! Web-builders can find out how to get listed with the latest and greatest directories, while surfers can find out additional advice for locating elusive Web sites.

Turbo10

http://turbo10.com

New kid on the block, Turbo10, is aiming to unseat Google as top dog in the search engine world with an ambitious promise to trawl the 'Deeper Web' for information. The search engine claims that most conventional search engines only search the 'Surface' Web. So, amazing new technology or well-packaged hyperbole? It remains to be seen, but it seems to work quite well and it's early days yet.

Jargon buster

Search engine

A powerful Web site that archives the content of the World Wide Web (although not all of it) into a searchable database.

Web directory

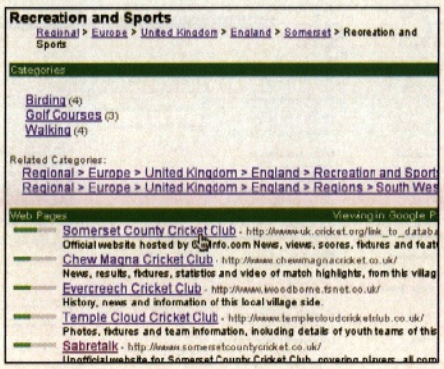
These are similar to search engines, but provide a list of categories, almost always presided over by human editors into which Web sites are arranged.

Operators

A set of criteria used by search engines to narrow down a search. Sometimes these are called Boolean operators, named after the Englishman who invented the system. Google lets you define operators from pull-down menus, rather than entering them manually. →

12 Directory enquiries

Google also has a Web directory. You can browse this for sites related to your search results by clicking the link where it says 'Category'. This is useful for viewing links that are related to your search, but don't fall under 'Similar sites'.

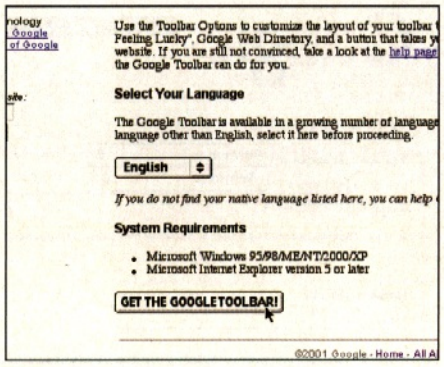


13 Directory directions

Here you can see that our original search has been augmented by more specific Somerset cricket links and other Somersetshire sports clubs. As with the search engine pages, click on a link to visit the relevant Web site.

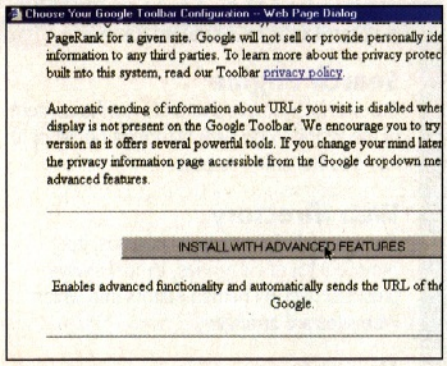
14 Direct to the Directory

You can go straight to the Google directory by clicking on the 'Directory' tab at **www.google.com** – from here it's a simple case of navigating through the various links or using keywords to narrow down the categories available to you.



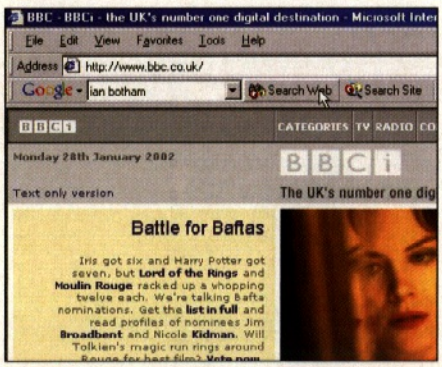
15 Get tooled up

No, we're not inviting you to stock up on concealed weapons. Instead, download the excellent Google Toolbar from **www.google.com/options/toolbar.html**. Just click on 'Get the Google Toolbar Now!' to proceed.



16 Choose your weapon

There are two different strains of Google Toolbar available. The first compromises your online privacy, but offers more advanced features, while the second is a stripped down version that won't infringe on your freedoms. Take your pick.



17 Use the toolbar

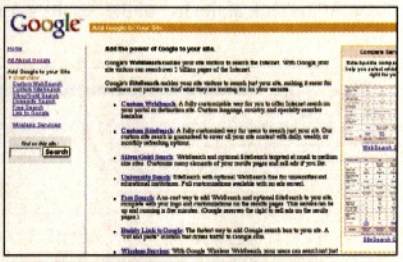
The toolbar should now download into your browser and appear automatically. To start using the toolbar, simply type a keyword or words into the Search Bar and then click on the 'Search Web' button.

Google resources

The Google Toolbar

www.google.com/options/toolbar.html

This handy little resource allows you to take advantage of Google's technology without even having to visit the search engine's Web site. It's also one of the best plug-ins you'll ever find for Internet Explorer. Simply download the toolbar and start searching as shown in steps 15-17 – you'll never look back.



Add Google to your site

www.google.com/services

Webmasters looking to add searching facilities to their Web sites will find Google both amenable and flexible in this aspect. The search engine has a number of options just waiting to be taken advantage of, ranging from the full-blown Google service down to a service that allows visitors to your site to search through your content. Point your browser at the URL above to get the lowdown.

Top Tip!

IF KEYWORDS AREN'T giving you much joy and you've tried the 'Advanced Searches' option, maybe a phrase search can help. Here you put the name of a person or proper noun into quotation marks ie "Paul Gascoigne" to let the search engine know that the words you are searching for must be found next to each other and capitalised.

No search engine will be able to provide you with all the answers you need and even the mighty Google may struggle with some requests. If you find yourself chasing your own tail when you should be chasing information, try swapping to a different search engine and repeating your search using the different features found there.

In brief:

Task: Find Web sites quickly
Software I need: Web Ferret 4.0
Difficulty: Beginner
Time I need: 10 minutes

ON THE CD

Give your Web searches a boost with Web Ferret

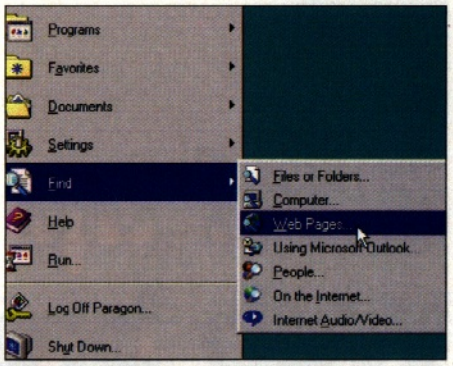
STRUGGLING FOR SUCCESS WITH SEARCH ENGINES? GIVE THIS POLE CAT-INSPIRED SEARCH TOOL A WHIRL

IF YOU FOLLOWED our previous tutorial, you'll hopefully have realised that searching for items on the Internet needn't be as difficult as trying to pinpoint the exact whereabouts of Osama Bin Laden. Armed with knowledge of how a certain search engine works, you stand every chance of finding information quickly. Sometimes, however, you may need a helping hand in the hunt for information. That's where Web Ferret comes in.

This useful utility allows you to query multiple searching services without having to actually fire up your Web browser and visit one. Like a comedy ferret in *Last Of The Summer Wine*, the program will stay hidden up your sleeve – it adds functionality to the 'Find' function of the Start menu – until you need it.

Searching is a simple matter of typing in a person, place or product and hitting Return. You can even set the program to filter out obscene or pornographic material.

If you're tempted to give this simple, yet effective search tool a workout then you'll find a copy included on our cover disc and a guide to using it below.

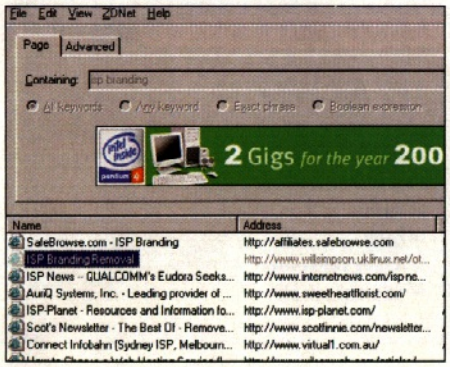


1 Unleash the ferret

Install Web ferret and double-click its icon to start the installation. Beware of the usual attempts to harvest your email address. Run your newly installed application by clicking the 'Start' menu, scrolling up to 'Find' and selecting 'Web Pages'.

2 Start ferreting

Launching the program summons up this dialog box. Use the white box to type in your search criteria and then hit the 'Find Now' button to start ferreting through the Web. Hone your search further still by clicking the 'Advanced' tab.



3 Viewing results

A list of Web sites will appear at the bottom of the window. Click the Internet Explorer icons next to each search result to view them in your browser. If you aren't satisfied with the results, click on 'New Search' and try different keywords.

4 Hone a search

There are a number of radio buttons positioned below the address bar that can refine your search further. Click in one of these to start a 'phrase search' or use Boolean operators and click 'Find Now'.

5 Beefy: the real me

When you view a search result it will open in your Web browser, along with a sidebar that allows you to peruse links. Click on one of these to view more sites. Here we've used AOL to pinpoint Somerset and England cricket giant Ian Botham.

In brief:

Task: Add new features to Internet Explorer
Software I need: Hydralinks on the CD
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 20 minutes

ON THE CD

Beef up your Web browser with Hydralinks

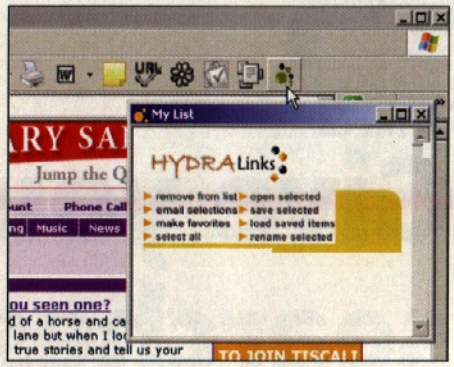
ADD EXTRA FUNCTIONALITY TO INTERNET EXPLORER AND IMPROVE THE WAY YOU BROWSE THE WEB

IT'S FAIR TO say that Internet Explorer is the first choice when it comes to Web browsing. However, even the best product can be improved and Microsoft's browser is no exception.

Since the launch of IE6, all manner of applications and plug-ins have sprung up designed to add extra functionality and complement the browser's existing features. One of the most effective of these is a browsing utility known as HydraLinks

The program makes it more comfortable to navigate Web pages by allowing you to instantly save them to a list for later viewing. Individual links can quickly be added to the 'My List' window via a pop-up menu that appears every time your mouse hovers over a link.

Drawing on the best features of other top browsers that never made it into Internet Explorer, HydraLinks lets you run multiple windows, effectively turning IE into a multi-pane browser, and navigate quickly without the use of the Back button. You can also instantly share interesting sites with your buddies through the program's ultra-simple link-emailing facility.



1 Start exploring

Install and run HydraLinks from the cover disc and launch Internet Explorer. You'll notice the HydraLinks icon appears in your IE toolbar, which lets you access the program's features at any time. Click on the icon to launch the 'MyList' window.

2 List your links

Once installed, HydraLinks allows you to keep track of any interesting links you come across. Every time you move your mouse pointer over a text or image, a small pop-up menu will appear. To add a link to My List select 'Put in list'.

3 File your pages

Your links will appear in the 'My List' window on your desktop. To access the pages, click on the links. To mark up the links you wish to keep a record of, tick the appropriate box to select a URL. You can rename links by clicking 'Rename selected'.

4 Introducing Hydragroups

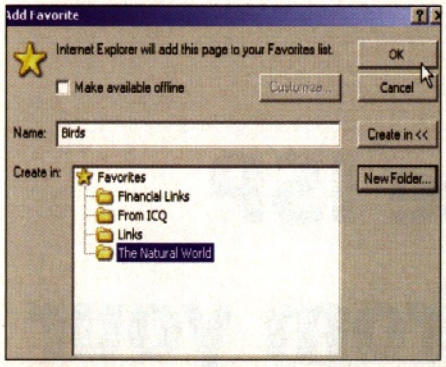
Once you've collected a cluster of links to keep, you can save them in a folder within the program known as 'Hydragroups'. Click 'Save selected' in the 'My List' window and enter a filename. Hit 'Save' to proceed.

5 Open saved links

To open up saved Hydragroups click 'Load saved items' from the 'My List' window and browse to the filename. The list of links is now displayed underneath the HydraLinks menu. To open all the pages at once, click 'Open selected'.

6 Split-screen shenanigans

IE will load your pages simultaneously either as cascading windows or multi-pane format, depending on the configuration of HydraLinks. You can navigate each page individually by clicking the appropriate window and using IE's browsing tools.



7 Update IE Favorites

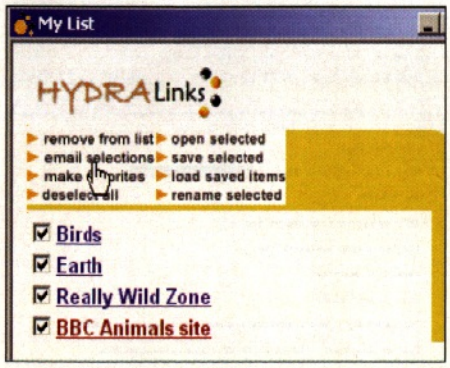
HydraLinks lets you add your links to your IE Favorites. Click 'Make Favorites' within the 'My List' window and enter a name. Click 'Create in' to choose a folder within Favorites or click 'New Folder' to add a folder. Click 'Save' to proceed.

8 Anchor links

HydraLinks allows you to navigate between pages using its 'Anchor' facility. This saves you having to keep pressing the Back button. Move the mouse over a link you know you want to come back to and click 'Anchor'.

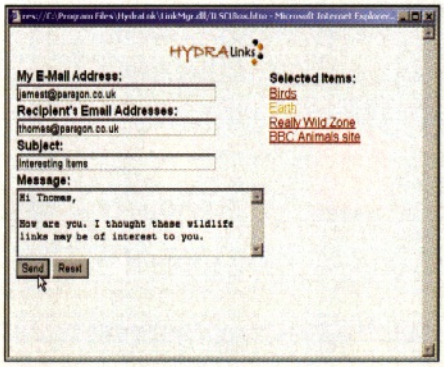
9 Take a step back

A floating 'Anchor' window containing the link will be displayed. As you're browsing the Web, you can return to this page by clicking this link. You can add as many Anchor windows as you like, to help you quickly return to useful pages.



10 Share your links

HydraLinks allows you to share your stored links with friends. Select the links you want to share by ticking the appropriate boxes in the My List menu, or click 'Select all' to highlight the full list. Now click the 'Email selections' option.



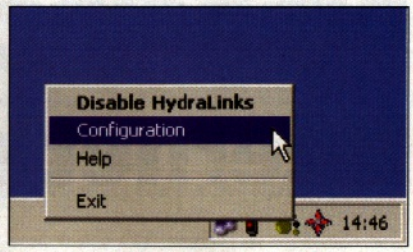
11 Post the links

Enter the recipient's email address along with your own and add any comments you wish to make. Click 'Send' to post the message. Confirmation that the email was sent successfully will be sent to your email Inbox.

HOW TO...

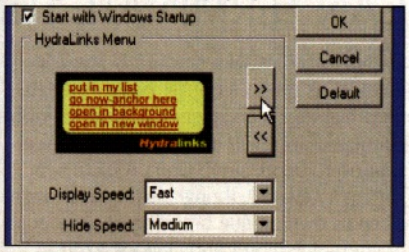
Tailor the display

ONE OF THE great features of HydraLinks is the fact that you can customise the program through its Configuration menu. Here, you can apply new skins, change Internet Explorer into a multi-tiled browser and move the My List window onto the toolbar to tidy up your desktop a bit.



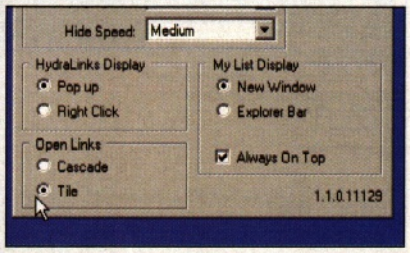
Open from system tray

You can access the various customisable options within HydraLinks by right-clicking on the Hydralinks icon in your system tray. You can switch the program off by clicking 'Disable HydraLinks'. To start optimising settings, choose 'Configuration' from the pop-up menu.



Menu skins

The 'HydraLinks Menu' section of the window lets you customise the appearance of the pop-up menu that appears when you move the mouse over a link. Cycle through the various menu styles using the arrow buttons and set the display speed and the hide speed from the drop-down menus.



Display settings

Decide whether you want the HydraLinks display to be shown automatically when you move over a link, or if you want to access it by right-clicking. Choose if you want to open multiple links as tiles, or by cascading them, and if you want the 'My List' menu to be displayed in a new window or on the IE toolbar.

In brief:

Task: Remove ISP branding
Software I need: None
Difficulty: It gets harder...
Time I need: 30 minutes

Remove the ISP branding from your Internet programs

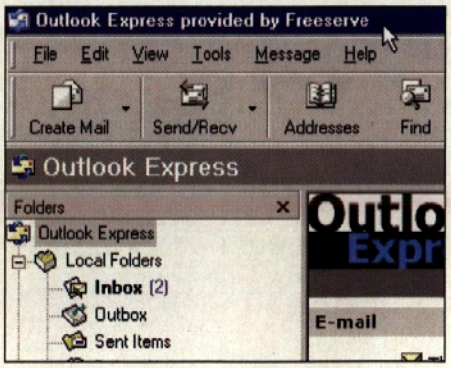
ISPS LIKE TO SPRAY BRANDING ALL OVER INTERNET EXPLORER AND OUTLOOK EXPRESS. ARMED WITH OUR ADVICE, YOU CAN TERMINATE THIS UNWANTED INTRUSION

SIGNING UP WITH a new ISP is something many of us do on a regular basis. After all, there's always a cheaper deal, a more reliable connection or even better quality technical support to be gleaned. One problem with getting a new ISP, though, is that each wants to place its own unique branding on your copies of Internet Explorer and Outlook Express.

Many Internet users get fed up with ISPs using their software as doodle pads for their names, logos and other indulgences. We know this, because you tell us how much it bugs you. Fortunately there is a solution, which we will share with you here.

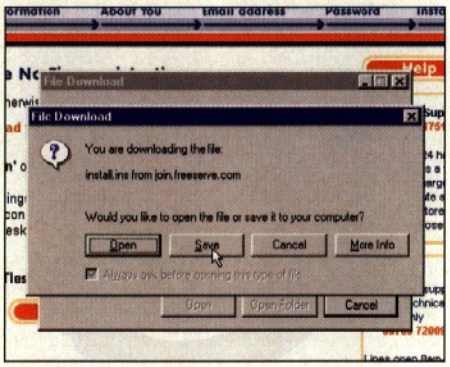
Branding usually occurs after you install an ISP from a CD-ROM or by signing up online. The best way to avoid this is to configure your computer manually, but many Net users don't feel confident enough to do this correctly.

We kick our tutorial off by showing you how to configure your PC automatically, but without getting the branding. We finish by revealing how to remove existing branding with the help of the Windows Registry.



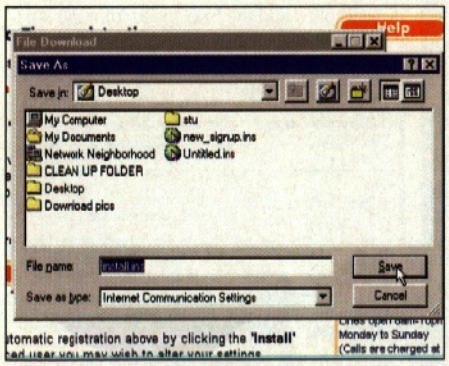
1 Assessing the damage

You've just signed up with a new ISP, but you've got slightly more than you bargained for. ISPs seem desperate to desecrate your titlebars with branding and here you can see Freeserve graffiti all over the toolbars of Outlook Express.



2 Just say no

Did you sign up online with your ISP? This is one of the most common ways to end up with ISP branding, but it can be avoided. To start your fight back, refuse any ISP's request that you open configuration files like this one from their locations.

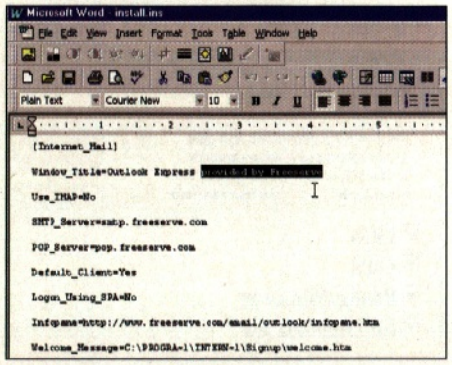


3 Save it to your PC

Instead of clicking 'Open' and inviting your new service provider to violate your program titlebars, opt to save the offending file to your Desktop. We have a little trick that we'd like to introduce you to...

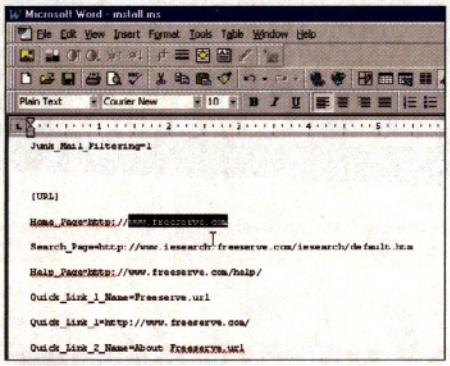
4 Open the offending file

Here's the devious download, just waiting to be launched by some poor unexpecting Internet user. If you want branding, double-click it. Alternatively, you should open the file up in a Word processing program.



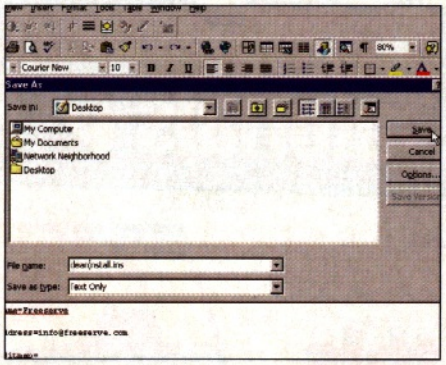
5 Edit the code

Once the file is open you'll see reams of code. This can be edited and saved down again – allowing you to configure your PC without branding. Look for the reference: window_title=Outlook Express and delete any further suffix.



6 Further editing

Search through the rest of the code for similar references. You should see a reference to Internet Explorer and even the code for changing your default home page. Perform similar editing feats on these references.



7 What a save

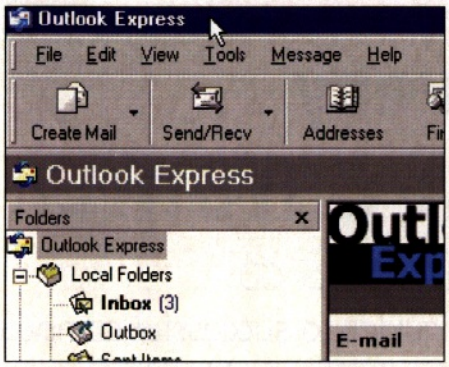
Once you have finished doctoring the configuration file, you will need to save it down again. We suggest renaming the file cleaninstall.ins, so that you still have the original file if anything goes wrong or you need to start from scratch.

8 Cross your fingers

Now launch the new file. You'll see the importance of saving this as a **.ins** file, as Windows automatically recognises it as a configuration file, despite the fact that it has been doctored. Double-click to complete your branding blitz.

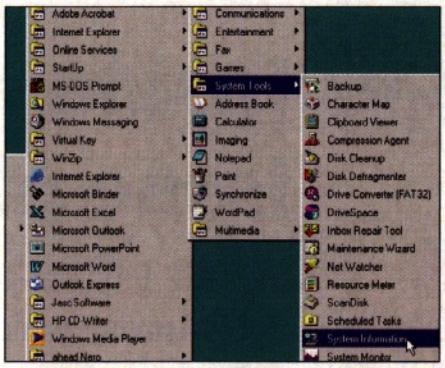
9 Confirm your changes

Windows will now warn you if you want to change your Internet settings, just as it would normally when you open the configuration file from its location on your ISP's server. Click 'OK' and wait…



10 Open Outlook and IE

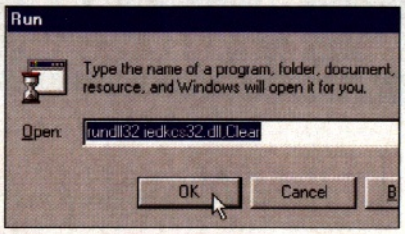
It's time for the moment of truth. Open up Outlook Express and Internet Explorer to check that everything has worked. Here you can see that our copy of Outlook Express is bristling with unviolated purity. *Practical Internet:* 1, ISP branding: 0.



11 May we frighten you

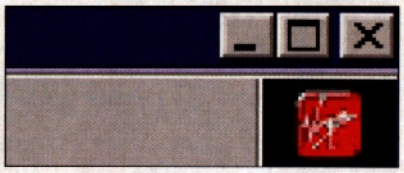
What if your PC is already branded? That's when you have to delve into the entrails of your PC and edit the Windows registry. This is not for the faint-hearted and can have disastrous effects if you do the wrong thing.

The quick method



THERE IS AN extremely quick method of removing all ISP branding from Internet Explorer, although it sadly doesn't work with Outlook Express. You have to use Windows' very own Development Kit Customiser, which can be found in the Windows System Folder. You don't need to go hunting for this, though, as you can simply type 'rundll32 iedkcs32.dll,Clear' into the 'Run' dialog on the 'Start' menu instead. Once you've entered this, minus the quotation marks and paying special attention to the space after the first 32, hit 'Return'. Your Internet Explorer interface will be returned to its original condition within seconds.

Brand extensions



IT'S HARD TO believe that ISPs choose to brand your toolbars to brighten up the Windows interface. No, the most likely reason for their intrusion is that they want you to subconsciously make a connection with their logo and brand so that you stay loyal to their product. It's an interesting approach, because we haven't spoken to anyone who likes it. The type of branding ISPs apply varies from just one simple word on the title bar of Internet Explorer, to substituting the Explorer logo with spinning icons – some ISPs even place an infuriating and pointless window underneath Outlook Express. While our tutorial only shows how to remove the words, rest assured that we will show you how to eradicate these other intrusions in future issues. In the meantime, you should take a look at **www.forrestandassociates.co.uk/pcforrest/ie_facelift.htm** for a simple solution.

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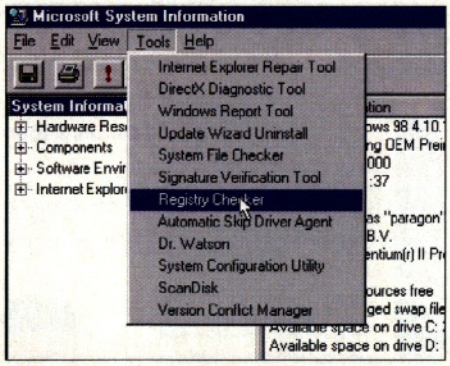
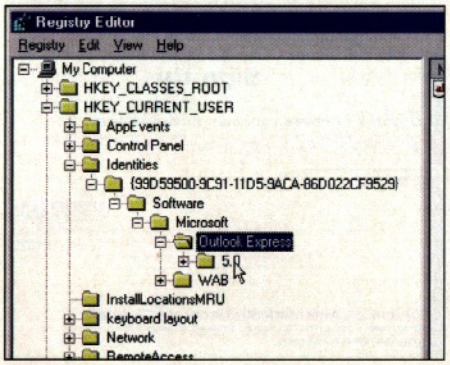


12 Backup the registry

First let's backup a copy of the Windows Registry. Hit 'Start', 'Programs', 'Accessories', 'System Tools', 'System Information'. When the dialog box appears, click the 'Tools' menu and select 'Registry Checker'. Hit 'Yes' to create a backup.

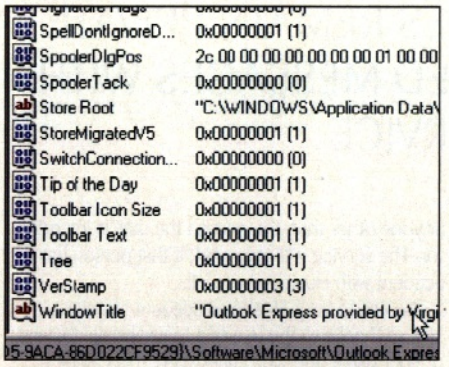
13 Run the Registry

Now run the Registry. Go to the 'Start' menu, click 'Run' and then type in 'regedit' to boot the registry editor. Be careful with this program. If you get it wrong here you could make your system unstable and end up needing to reinstall Windows.



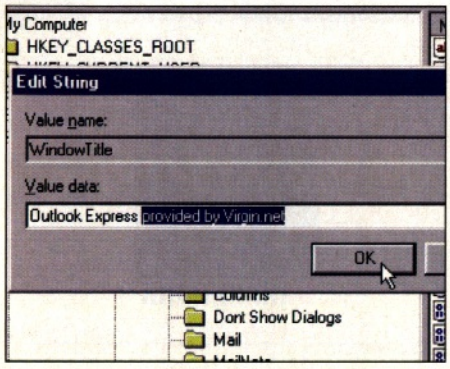
14 Find the branding

When the registry opens you'll see a list of folders on the left. Click the '+' sign next to the 'HKEY_CURRENT _USER' folder and then open 'Identities', 'Software', 'Microsoft' and 'Outlook Express'. Now double-click the '5.0' folder.



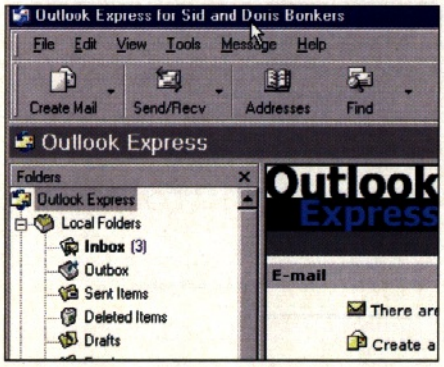
15 Edit the Window Title

On the right-hand side of the interface you'll see a list of icons. Scroll right down to the bottom and you should see one called 'Window Title'. Double-click on the icon to open the 'Edit String' dialog box.



16 Cleaning Windows

In here you'll see the branding that disfigures your toolbars. Delete the offending bits or even add your own branding. Be ambitious – type your own name in and personalise it to yourself. Click 'OK' to save.



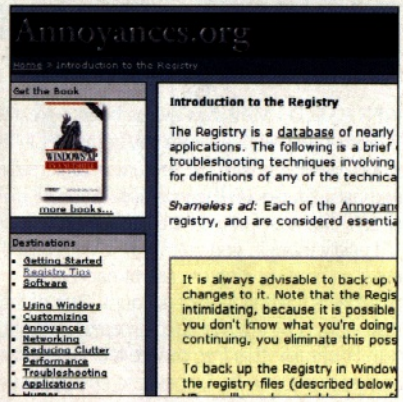
17 Nice clean Windows

Now shut down the registry before you are tempted to tinker any further. Launch Outlook Express and… hey presto – the ISP branding has disappeared to be replaced by the names of our loyal readers Sid and Doris Bonkers.

Top tip!

THE BEST WAY to avoid ISP branding is to sign up online and then configure your PC manually. Almost all ISPs offer you this option. What you'll need for this is nothing more simple than good old-fashioned pen and paper so that you can take down your username, password, mail and news server details, then it's just a simple case of visiting each part of your PC in turn to set it all up. It's a pain having to configure Dial-Up Networking, your email account and newsgroup access, but it'll save you from title bar atrocities, spinning logos and other ISP junk.

Top tip!



OF ALL THE programs that run on your computer, the Windows Registry is undoubtedly the most dangerous. In itself the Registry isn't a threatening program, but placed in the wrong hands or a curious experimenter it can be a nightmare.

Effectively, the Registry controls the entire behaviour of your PC and the programs that run on it. Editing this without due care and attention invites trouble, because mistakes here can cause Windows to become unstable and/or behave erratically. You don't really want to reinstall Windows now, do you?

As long as you follow the instructions printed here to the letter and back up the Registry before you start fiddling, nothing will go wrong. If you are tempted to stray from the path, then don't say we didn't warn you if it all goes pear-shaped. To find out more about the Registry visit **www.annoyances.org/exec/show/registry.**

In brief:
Task: Send encrypted Webmail messages
Software I need: None, it's done online
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 15 minutes

Use Hushmail to send encyrpted email messages

ENSURE YOUR MESSAGES REMAIN PRIVATE BY SENDING ENCRYPTED MESSAGES WITH THIS FREE WEBMAIL SERVICE

WEB-BASED EMAIL has always been a great way to exchange greetings from any computer in the world. However, with the amount of junk mailing and hack attacks on the increase, Webmail isn't always the most secure means of communication.

Luckily though, you can still use Web-based email without running the risk of hackers or pranksters infiltrating your account. One of the best ways is by signing up to an email account with Hushmail. This free service lets you easily apply some Open PGP coding to encrypt your messages, ensuring that they cannot be read by anyone other than the person the mail is intended for. The service will only work if that person has an account with Hushmail as well.

Access to your Hushmail account remains ultra secure thanks to the use of a 'passphrase'. Instead of your usual one word password, this can be a phrase containing any number of words of phrases. You also need to generate an encryption code to make your account unique, and ensure that no outsiders can possibly access your messages. This is made dead easy with Hushmail's simple account set up process.

1 Drop in on Hushmail

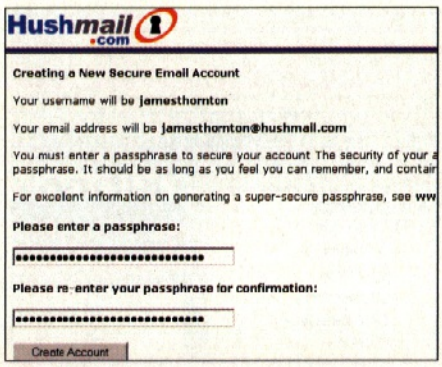
First pay a visit to the Hushmail home page at **www.hushmail.com**. Click on the 'Sign up' icon to begin the process. Remember to read the terms and conditions and click 'Yes' to continue.

2 Pick a username

Now enter a username for your account. This will become part of your email address, so choose carefully. Alternatively, you can get Hushmail to automatically generate a name for you. Hit 'Continue' to do just that.

3 Download the plug-in

The first time you log into the service, you'll need to download a small file in order to access the Hushmail browser. This is done automatically. When prompted with the Security Warning, click the 'Yes' button to continue.

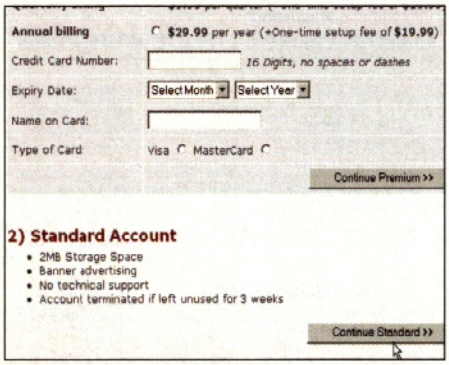


4 Enter your passphrase

Now enter your passphrase, taking care to read the instructions first. Try to make sure that you enter something that's easy for you to remember but impossible for anyone else to know. Enter the passphrase and click 'Create Account'.

5 Generate the code

Now you need to create some encryption 'keys' for your account. This involves running your mouse around the box in the middle of the screen until the bar fills up. The encryption code will now be generated based on your mouse movements.



6 Choose your account type

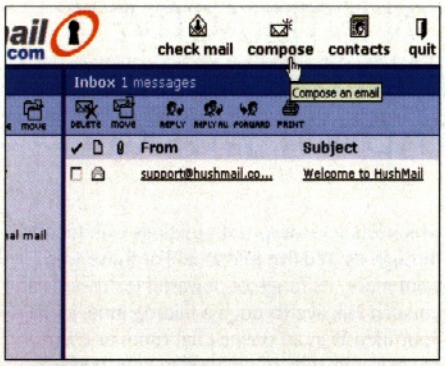
Once the encryption code has been set, you need to provide some personal details and select the type of mail account that you want. For the standard free Webmail account, scroll down and click on the 'Continue Standard' button to proceed.

7 Get friends on-board

Because only other Hushmail users will be able to read your mail, it's wise to get as many of your friends to sign up with the service as possible. Enter the names and email addresses of those you want to tell about the service and click 'Send'.

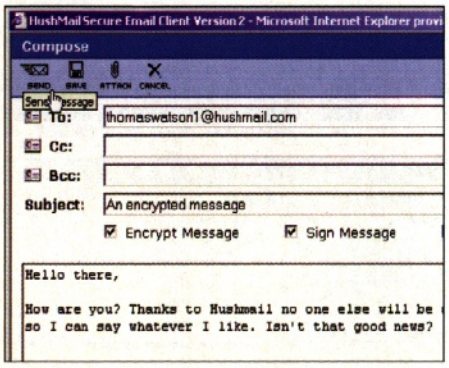
8 Log in

Now click the 'Log in' tab to return to the home page and select 'Standard users log-in'. Since you've registered, you can login by entering your username and clicking the 'Login' button. Now enter the pass phrase you registered earlier.



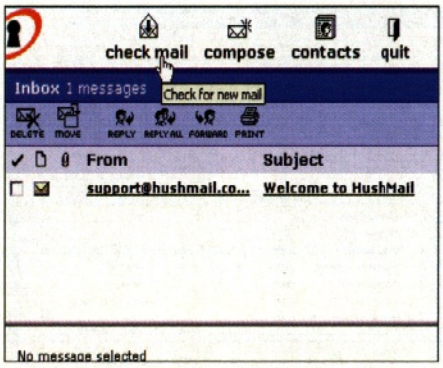
9 The Hushmail Inbox

You'll now be taken to the Hushmail folders interface, which opens in the Inbox. The email control menu runs along the top of the page. To add a new folder, click 'New' and enter a folder name. To start working on a new email click 'Compose'.



10 Compose a message

Type your message and enter the email address of the recipient in the 'To' field. Tick the 'Send Securely' box to encrypt your message then click 'Send' to post the message. Remember that only other Hushmail users can read encrypted mail.



11 Have you got mail?

To find out if you have any new mail, click the 'Check mail' button. To read a message, tick the box in the 'Select' column and click 'Read'. When you wish to exit Hushmail, click 'Quit' and shut down IE to preserve your security.

The rivals...

Free Webmail services

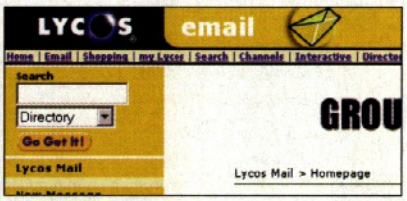
The number of companies willing to provide free Web-based email has dipped somewhat in recent months, with many services electing to introduce charges. However, there are still a number of decent Webmail providers, like Hushmail, that are lurking around that will let you check your mail from any computer with an Internet connection.

Hotmail

Microsoft's massively popular Hotmail (**www.hotmail.com**) is truly the daddy of all Webmail services, spawning masses of copycat sites. Despite rumours to the contrary, the service is still free and Hotmail's security options mean that when you log-in, your sign-in name and password are encrypted and sent over the Internet using a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) connection.

Yahoo! Mail

Another much-worshipped Web-based email service, Yahoo! Mail (**uk.yahoo.com**) gives you 6Mb of free storage space for your messages and even lets you instantly see when you have new mail through its sister application, Yahoo! Messenger. As well as featuring a secure sign-in, you can also filter out unwanted junk mail thanks to the 'Spamguard' facility.



Lycos Email

The easy-to-use Lycos Email service (**www.lycos.co.uk**) comes with a host of features yet no charges, allowing you to view your attachments directly in your browser and send greetings cards online. What's more, it comes with a chunky 15Mb of Web space for your Inbox and even provides a translation service for exchanging messages with foreign pals.

In brief:

Task: Sending instant messages
Software I need: Yahoo! Messenger
Difficulty: Beginner
Time I need: As long as you like

ON THE CD

Get chatting with this great guide to Yahoo! Messenger

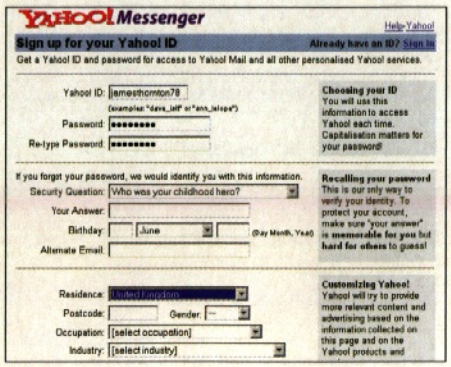
IT'S EASY TO TAKE PART IN INTERACTIVE CHATS WITH THIS GREAT IM CLIENT AT YOUR DISPOSAL. WE EXPLAIN HOW IT WORKS

EVER SINCE THE invention of the telephone, the communications industry has been coming up with more and more convenient ways for people to stay in touch with each other.

In terms of the Internet, instant messaging rules the roost. Originally adopted by reclusive geeks to exchange seedy comments, this cult phenomenon has now exploded into the mainstream. As the number of users grows, it makes sense to grab an instant messenger.

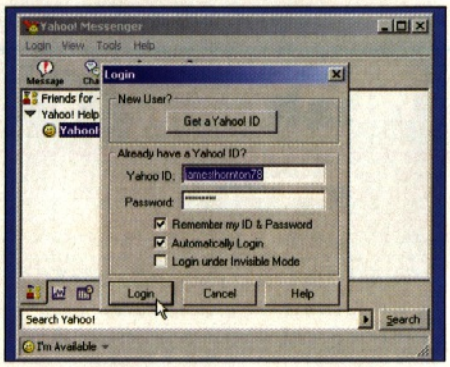
One of the finest and most popular instant messaging programs is Yahoo! Messenger, which lets you swap text greetings with friends through its intuitive interface. For those who want more, its range of powerful features mean you can talk live through a microphone, join your friends in an online chat room or even beam live images of yourself to your buddies through a Webcam.

We show you how you to get started with Yahoo! Messenger, take you through the basic principles of chatting online and look at ways of livening up your chatting experience with the program's various special options.



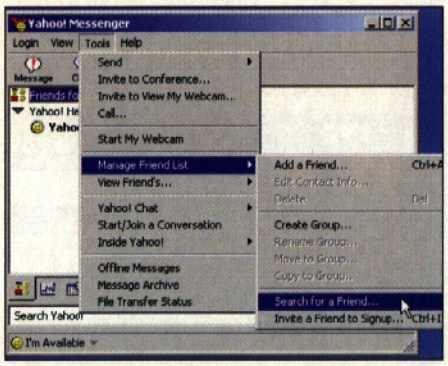
1 Get an ID

Install and run Yahoo! Messenger from this month's cover disc. If you have not used Yahoo! before, click on 'Get a Yahoo! ID' from the Login window. Once you've filled out the form, click the 'Submit this Form' button.



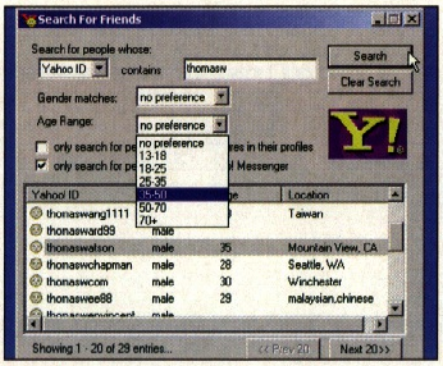
2 Signing in

Once you've sorted out your Yahoo! ID you need to return to the Messenger Login window. Enter your ID and password and click the 'Login' button. To save having to do this every time you use the program, tick the 'Automatically Login' box.



3 Find a friend

Yahoo! Messenger lets you track down friends that are online and look for random people to talk to who match your profile. To start looking, choose 'View Friends' from the Tools menu and pick 'Search for a Friend'.

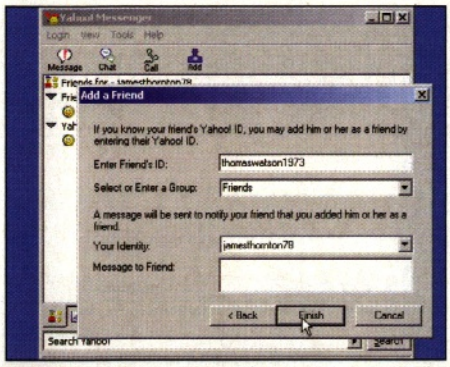


4 Pinpoint your buddy

Decide whether you want to search by name, Yahoo! ID, or keyword and enter their name or part of their name in the dialog box. Alternatively, choose to search by gender or age using the drop-down lists. Click 'Search' to proceed.

5 Check them out

You can check out your chosen friend by clicking the 'View Profile' button in the Search for Friends window. You can also view a picture of them if they've included one. Click 'Add to friends list' to add this person to your list of contacts.

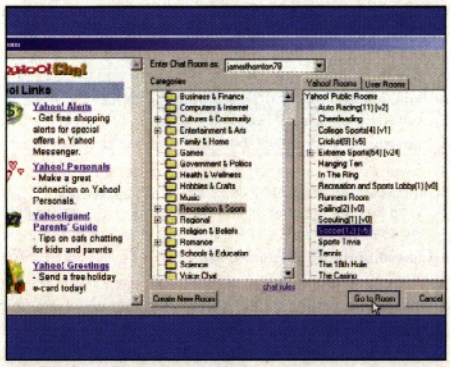


6 Instant adding

If you already know a friend's Yahoo! ID you can add them to your Friends list by clicking the 'Add' icon in the Yahoo! Messenger window. Type their ID and specify a title for the group of contacts you want to add them to. Click 'Finish'.

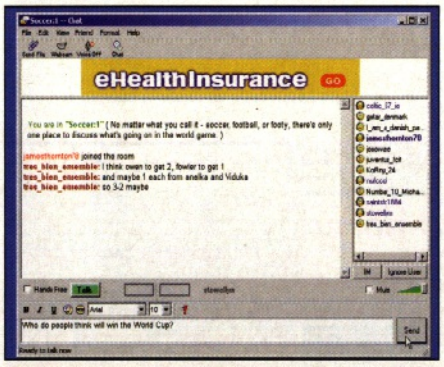
7 Let's get chatting

One of the best features of Yahoo! Messenger is the quick access it gives you to a whole variety of Internet chat rooms. To enter the chat arena, click on the 'Chat' icon on the Messenger toolbar.



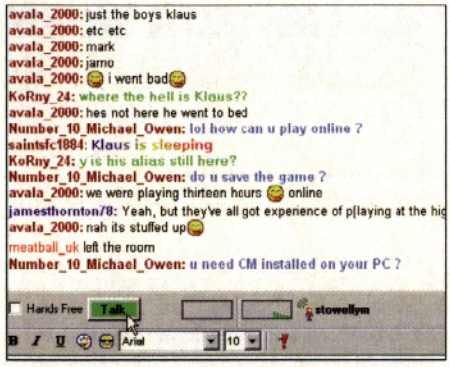
8 Find a room

The list of the various subjects is displayed in the 'Categories' menu in the centre of the window. Click a category you're interested in to see a list of the available discussion rooms. Select a room and click 'Go to Room'.



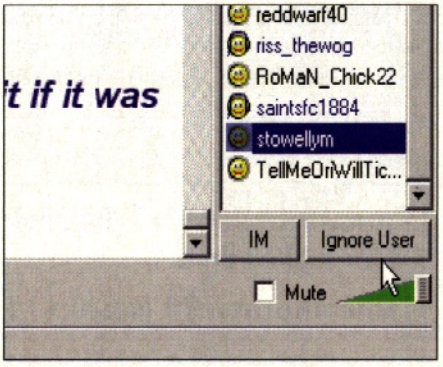
9 Enter the discussion

Once in the chat room, you will see a list of the people in the room in the right-hand window. The main window contains the comments made so far. To enter the chat, type your message in the window at the bottom of the interface and hit 'Send'.



10 The power of speech

To join a voice discussion with others in the room, ensure that your microphone is plugged in and click the 'Talk' button. You can now chat to any user that has a headphone icon next to their ID simply by speaking into the mic.

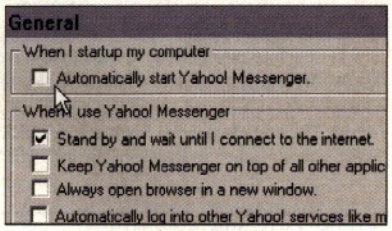


11 Ignorance is bliss

If you find yourself getting pestered or annoyed by one of the other room users, you can request to ignore all of their voice or text messages by clicking their ID and hitting the 'Ignore User' button.

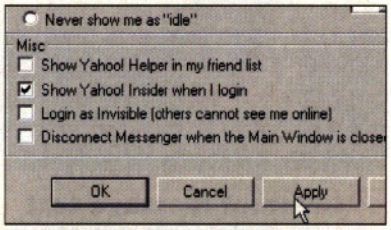
Easy method: Messaging options

WHILE YAHOO! MESSENGER is a superb utility, many users have registered their annoyance with some of the program's little quirks. Luckily, Messenger includes a comprehensive 'Preferences' section that allows you to tweak the program and remove some of these irritating aspects.



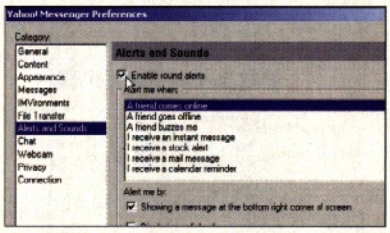
Prevent auto-start

If you don't want Yahoo! Messenger to load up every time you switch on your machine, choose 'Preferences' from the 'Login' menu in the Messenger and click on the 'General' category. Untick the box to turn off auto-start.



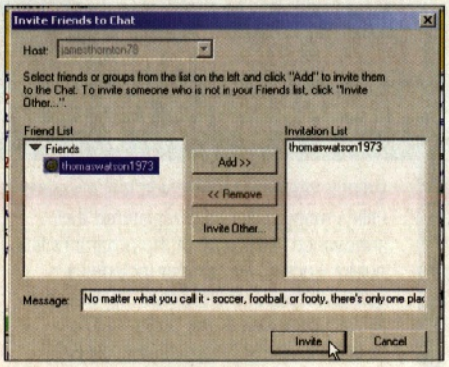
Turn off Yahoo! Helper

The 'Yahoo! Helper', located in the Friends List in Messenger gives you the chance to report technical queries about the service, but unless you're best buddies with the Yahoo! Help staff, you'll probably never use it. Turn it off by deselecting the box inside the 'Misc' section in the 'General' Preferences menu.



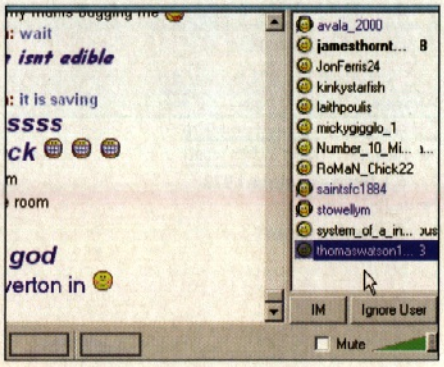
Disable sound alerts

Another aspect of Messenger that starts to wear a bit thin after a while is the sound alerts on messages. While the various buzzes, ding-dongs and knocking effects are fairly amusing at first, you'll probably want to turn them off by selecting 'Alerts and Sounds' from the Preferences menu and unticking 'Enable sound alerts'.



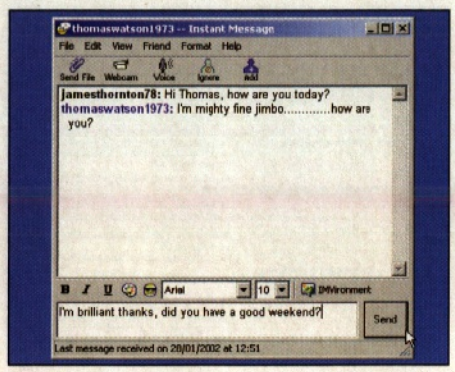
12 Invite a friend

To invite one of your friends to join the discussion choose 'Invite to Chat room' from the 'Friends' menu. Choose someone from your Friends List and click 'Add'. Alternatively, click 'Invite Other', enter their Yahoo! ID and click 'Invite'



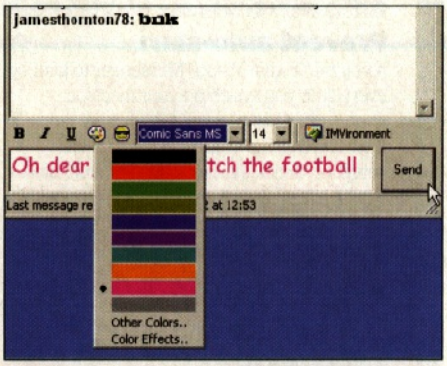
13 Private messaging

If you wish to have a private conversation with just one person from the room, double-click their Yahoo! ID in the right-hand window to spawn a new window. Now you can chat privately without being distracted by comments from other users.



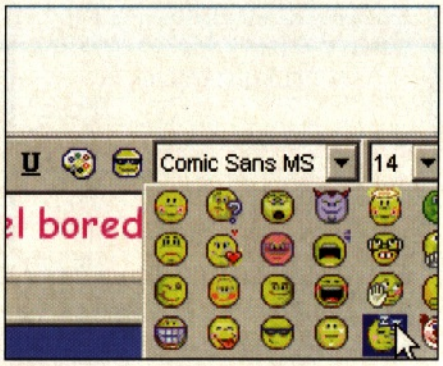
14 Instant message interface

You will now enter the instant messaging interface. To send a message, type your greeting in the text box at the bottom of the interface and click 'Send'. Your message will be sent to your friend and displayed in the main window.



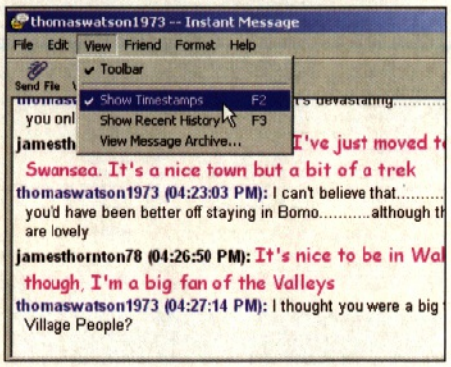
15 Format message text

You can change the style and layout of your text using the various formatting options. Choose a font style and size from the drop-down lists and select a colour from the palette icon. If you wish, click 'Color Effects' to add interesting colour blends.



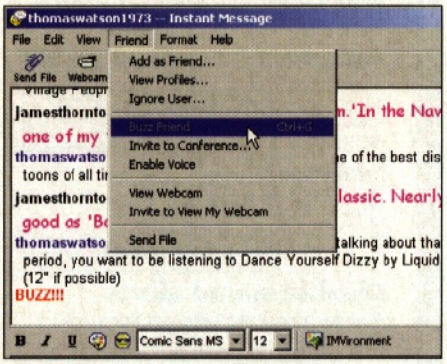
16 Show some emotion

Emoticons are a useful and fun way of showing people how you are feeling without the need for words. Click the 'Smiley' face icon on the toolbar to access all the emoticons. Click on the one you want and hit 'Send'.



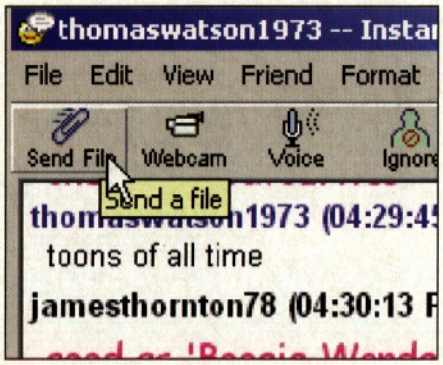
17 Message information

To access more detailed information about a conversation, click the 'View' menu. Click 'Show Timestamps' to see the exact time that each message was written and choose 'Show Recent History' to access a transcript of recent conversations.



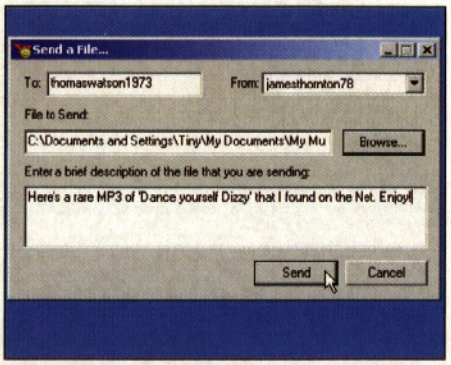
18 Buzz your mates

You can access a range of different control options from the 'Friend' menu. Another neat feature here is the 'Buzz Friend' option, which alerts your friend to your presence by 'shaking' their interface and playing a doorbell sound.



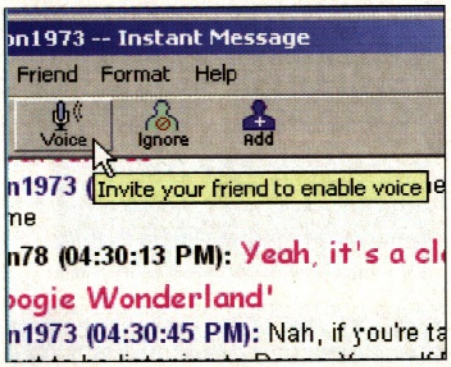
19 Attach a file

Yahoo! Messenger allows you to send a file or document to a friend. This could be a text document, picture or even a small application. You can access the file by clicking on the 'Send File' icon at the left-hand side the toolbar.



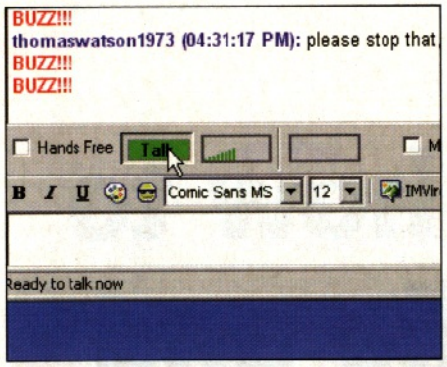
20 Send the file

Now access the file's location on your hard drive by clicking the 'Browse' button and clicking on the relevant directory. Enter a brief description of the file that you're sending in the window beneath and click 'Send' to proceed.



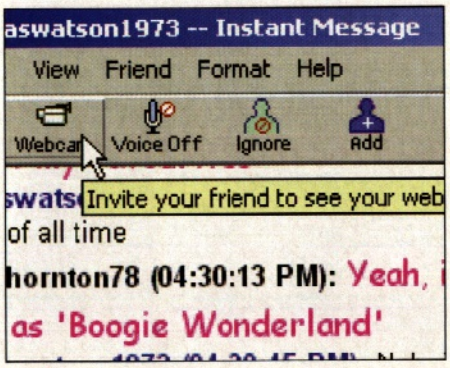
21 Initialise voice chatting

Access the voice chat facility by clicking the 'Voice' icon in the main toolbar. Your friend will receive a message asking them to enable their voice conference service. Once you're both connected to the audio server, you can begin a conversation.



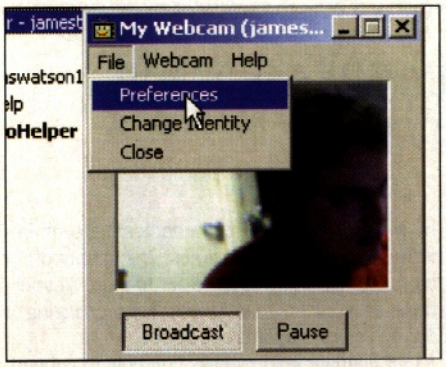
22 Happy talk

Click and hold down the 'Talk' button. Once you've said your piece, release the button and await your friend's response. If you're using a headphones and mic set, tick the 'Hands-free' box. Now you no longer need to hold down the 'Talk' button.



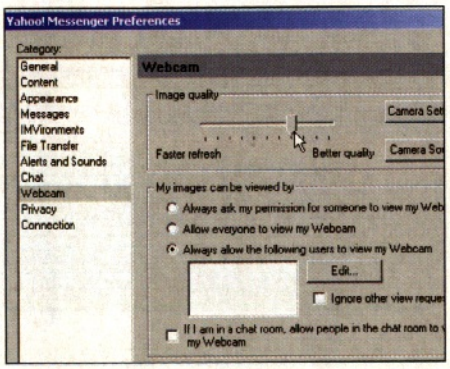
23 Fun with Webcams

The program also allows you to show a live Webcam feed for video conferencing with your friends. Hook your Webcam up to your PC in the normal way. Now click on the 'Webcam' button inside the main toolbar to proceed.



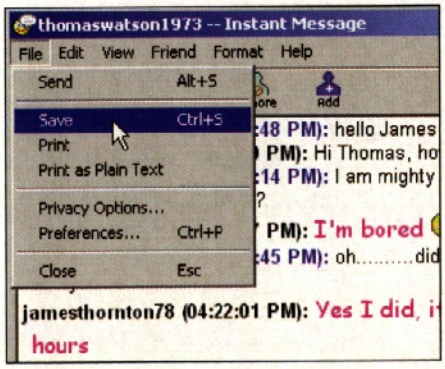
24 Show your face

Click 'OK' to proceed through the warning screen. Your image will be displayed in the 'My Webcam' window and broadcast to whoever you're talking to. To freeze the image, hit 'Pause'. Click 'Preferences' to change the Webcam setup.



25 Webcam options

Change the image quality and refresh rate by moving the slider in the Webcam Preferences menu. You can also alter the settings regarding who you want to view your Webcam. Click 'OK' when you're finished.



26 Store conversations

Yahoo! Messenger allows you to store conversations by saving all the comments you have made as a text file. Choose 'Save' from the File menu inside the messenger interface and enter a file name before hitting 'Save'.

HOW TO...

Switch interfaces

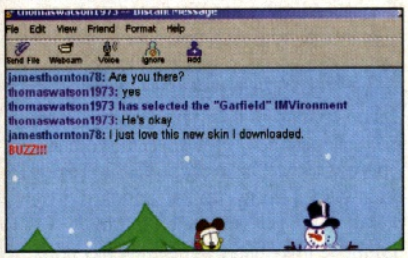
ONE OF THE most interesting additions to the latest version of Yahoo! Messenger is its 'IMvironments'. These are skins you can apply to the messaging interface to make your instant rendezvous all the more enjoyable. When you load up one of the environments the person you are talking to at the time will also see the same style interface. What's more, you can also download many more skins from the Net to impress your mates.

Choose an environment

To find an environment, click the 'IMvironments' button inside the Instant Message window. Click on the name of an environment to display a preview in the right-hand window. Once you've found one that you like, click 'OK' to apply it to your interface.

Search for new skins

If you're not satisfied with the preset skins, you can download new environments by clicking on the 'Find more IMvironments' link. Browse through the selection contained on the site and click on the 'Download' link to install and load the skin.



Your new interface

Now you can enjoy a new twist to your instant messages. Continue to communicate as normal and watch closely, because each different skin has its own amusing or eye-catching animations that pop up every so often.

In brief:

Task: Learn how to burn CDs
Software I need: An MP3 ripper, an audio player and a CD burner
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 45 minutes

ON THE CD

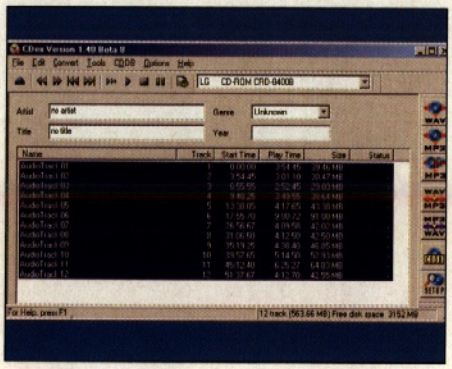
Discover how to burn audio and MP3 CDs

ARMED WITH A STACK OF MP3s AND A CD-WRITER, YOU CAN EASILY CREATE YOUR PERFECT DESERT ISLAND DISC

BACK IN PRE-MP3 times, listening to music on your PC was a limiting experience, to say the least. The only real options open to you were either to put the album into the CD tray or not. At this point, you were much better off just shoving the CD in question into your hi-fi, and forgetting all about the hassle of running music on your PC.

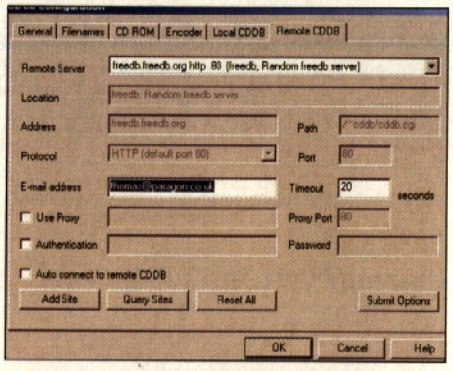
Times have changed, though, and it's now a common occurrence to see PC users cram their hard drives with tracks full of the albums they listen to the most. This is thanks largely to both the MP3 format and the phenomenal growth in hard drive size in recent times. The upshot of this is that it's now much easier to store all your music on your PC than have to keep changing CDs to listen to a different album.

Our ultimate guide shows you how to convert all of your favourite albums into MP3, and what you should be doing to get the most out of your music. We'll also show you how to transfer your files, and even create your own compilation albums, to be played on any CD player you wish.



1 Song list

After opening your ripping software (we're using CDex, from **www.download.com**), insert an audio CD. You'll see the contents of the CD. Unfortunately we have no track names yet, but this is easy to fix – just as long as you're online.

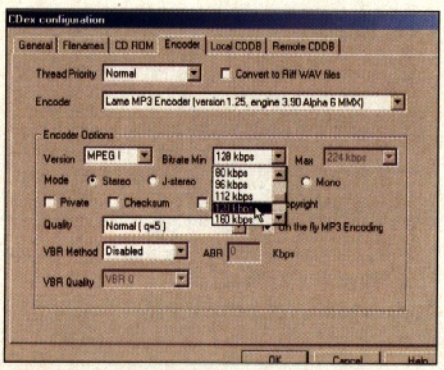


2 Database registration

In order to pick up information from the remote database, you need to register for the service. Go to 'Options', then 'Settings', and click on the 'Remote CDDB' tab. Fill your email address in the space provided, as shown above.

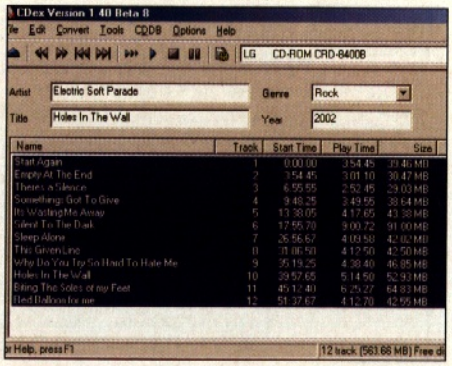
Top Tip!

IF YOU FIND the constant hassle of having to manually add each and every song into your mega Winamp playlist, there is an option that should make the whole process easier. Instead of using the Winamp 'Add file' dialog, simply browse to the folder where your MP3s are kept. Right-clicking on any MP3 brings up the standard drop-down menu, but with an option to 'Enqueue in Winamp'. This basically adds the currently selected file to the Winamp playlist, and makes it far more straightforward to add multiple tracks to the program.



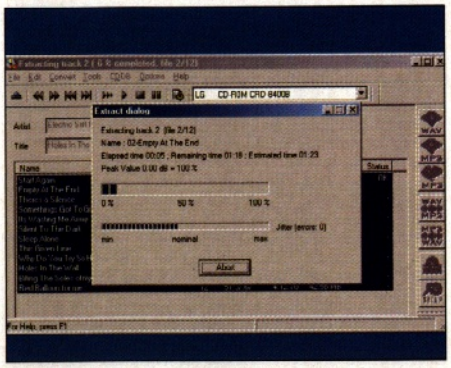
3 Burn settings

While we're in the Settings section, click the 'Encoder' tab to bring up ripping options. The main thing is the 'Bitrate' figure, which specifies the quality of MP3 file produced – 128Kbps provides near CD quality.



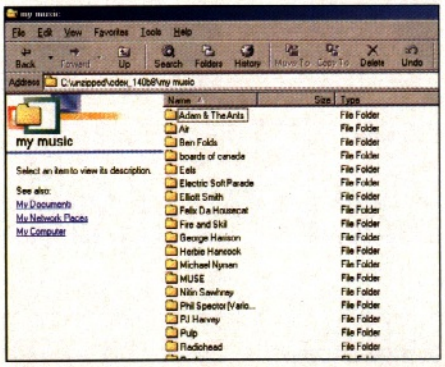
4 Get track info

Now we've set up the remote database, you can quickly and easily pick up track names by clicking the 'CDDB' button in the main toolbar. As long as the album is recognised, the file name of each song will change accordingly.



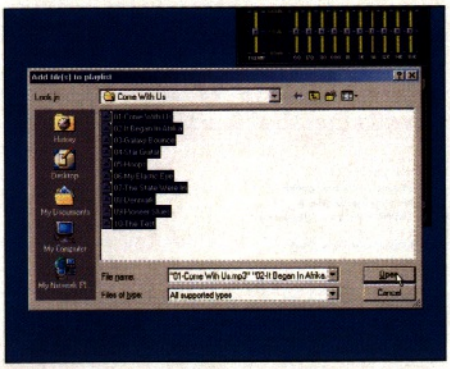
5 Rip away

The tedious stuff is complete, so let's start converting the CD to MP3. To do this, click on the 'CD to MP3' icon in the main toolbar, and sit back as your files are converted. It should take around 15 minutes to rip a full album.



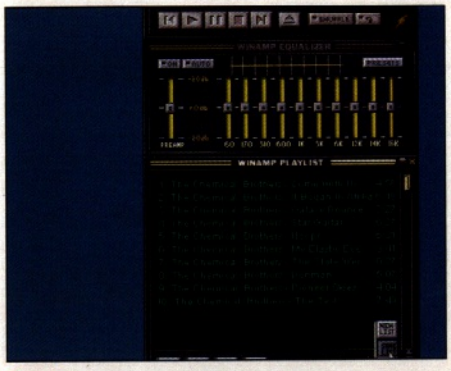
6 Control your MP3s

After a few burning sessions, you should quickly find yourself with a decent collection of MP3 albums. To listen to them, you're going to need an MP3 player – we're using the best currently available, Winamp.



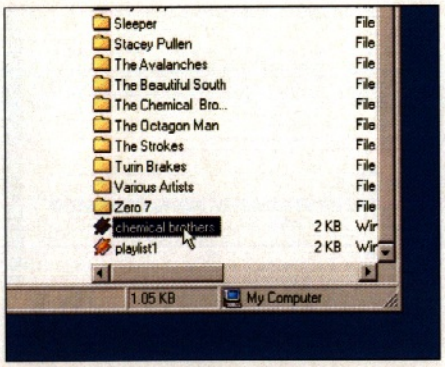
7 Importing albums

To import an album into Winamp, either press 'L' on the keyboard, or click on the 'Add' button at the bottom-left, then select 'Add file'. Browse your hard drive for the album in question, then select all of the songs to import them.



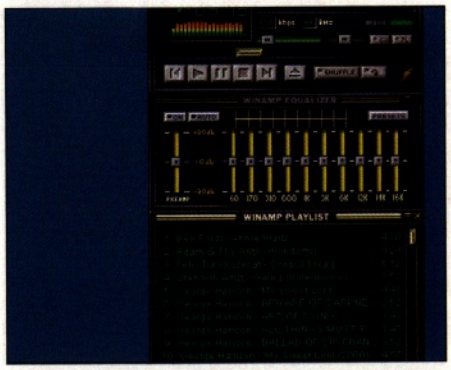
8 Save a playlist

Importing your music in this way is pretty slow and cumbersome, and can often mess up the song order. To remove this problem, you can save your album – including the track order– as a playlist. Click on 'List Opts', then choose 'Save list'.



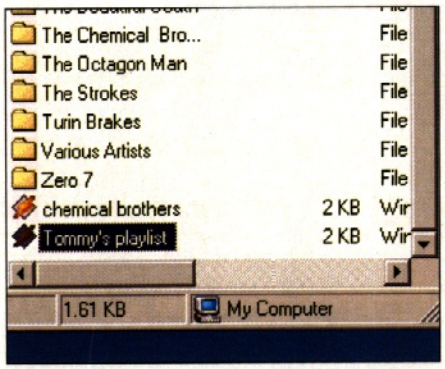
9 The playlist

You can save the tiny playlist file anywhere you like on your hard drive. Instead of importing tunes, you can now simply double-click on this playlist file, and your album will instantly be loaded into Winamp.



10 Compilations

The chances are that you won't want to listen to the same track order again and again, which is where your MP3 collection comes into its own. You can add individual tracks in the same manner as before, until you build up a sterling playlist.

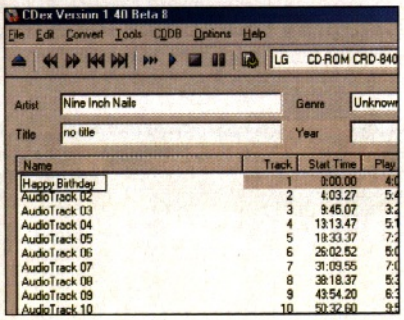


11 Save your compilations

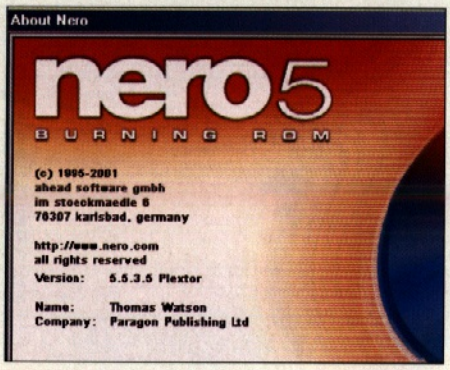
Saving your playlist is easy. The only thing to remember is to give your playlist a suitable title. As you build up more MP3 tracks, you'll find yourself with more playlists, and naming wisely proves more and more invaluable.

Top Tips!

ALTHOUGH IT'S A damn fine program, there are a few problems that can occur as you use CDex. If, for example, your CD information isn't found on the database, you'll be faced with the prospect of an MP3 collection consisting largely of tracks entitled 'Track 1' and so on. An easy solution to this is to enter the track names yourself in CDex. Make sure you do it before you convert the tracks, though, or you'll find yourself having to use an IDE tag converter program.

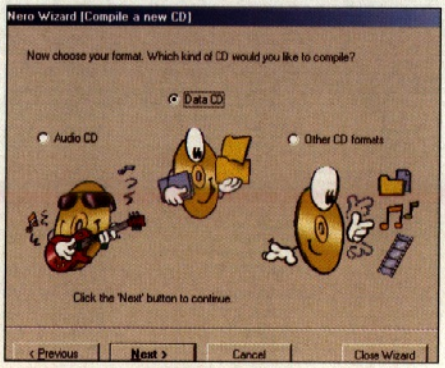


ONE OF CDEX'S main selling points is the way that it tells you when there's a problem with a converted file. Instead of the usual 'OK' notification, any track with jitter errors (or jumps) will display an 'X'. The simple way around this problem is just wait until the CD has been fully converted, then take it out and clean it. Select only the track that went wrong, then try converting it again. If there are still problems, then you probably have a scratched or broken CD.



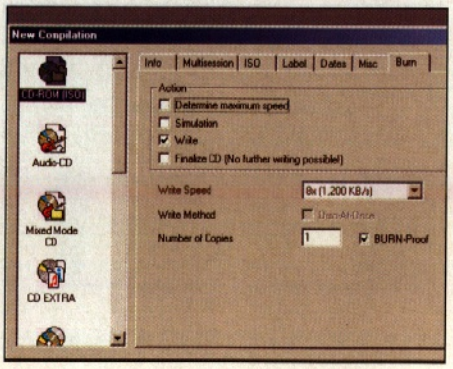
12 Burning MP3s

Copying an MP3 collection to CD is a great way of storing large numbers of songs – a CD can hold around 150 songs in MP3 format. To show you how to do this, we're going to use Nero, which you can get from **www.ahead.de**



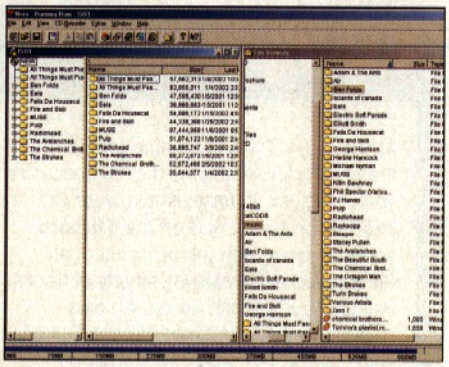
13 Use the wizard

After opening Nero, go to 'File' and choose 'New'. This brings up the 'New compilation' window, where you can select various settings for your CD. You can make life easier by clicking the Wizard button, for a step by step answer to CD settings.



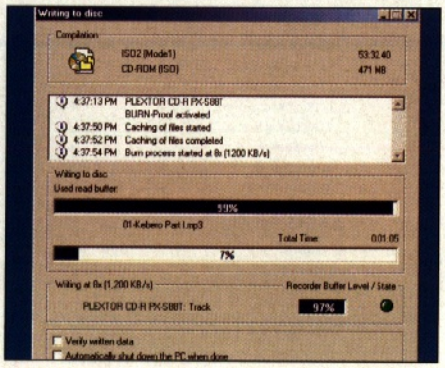
14 The long route

You can also alter settings manually. The main thing to look out for are the CD type (be it audio or data), and that you haven't set the copy to 'Multisession' by mistake. Under the 'Burn' tab, you can also set the speed of your burner.



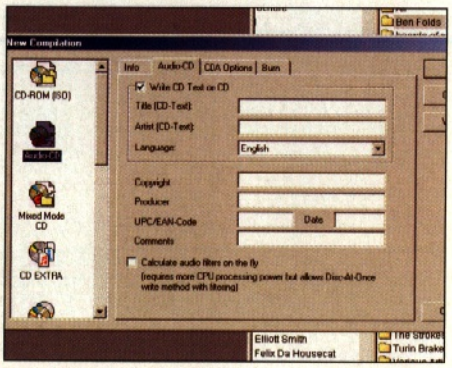
15 Copying files

Setting the files to be copied to CD is a simple matter of dragging and dropping. If you're going to copy vast numbers of albums, make sure you copy across the folders. Once you've finished, click the 'Burn' icon in the main toolbar.



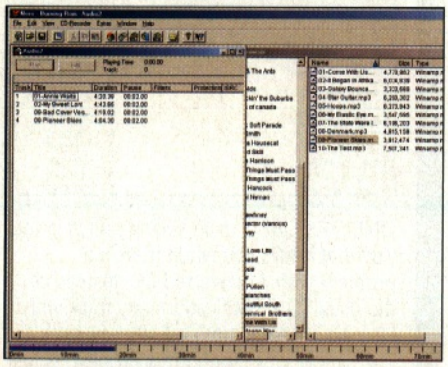
16 The burn

The burning time will differ according to the hardware you're using, but the principles are the same. Nero keeps you updated with the progress bar along the bottom. The burn will only be complete when the bar reaches the end.



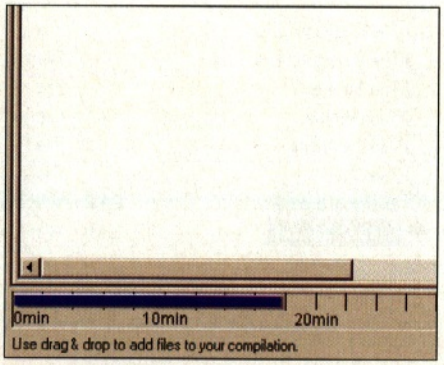
17 An audio CD

Nero also has built-in options to make burning an audio CD easy and will even convert MP3s into CDA format for you, allowing you to play the CD on any player. Select the 'Audio CD' option in either the wizard or 'New compilation'.



18 Build the CD

Again, you can simply drag and drop tracks from your MP3 collection into the CD window to copy them to the disc. Because we're copying to audio CD, there's no point in using folders, as they will obscure the tracks from standard CD players.

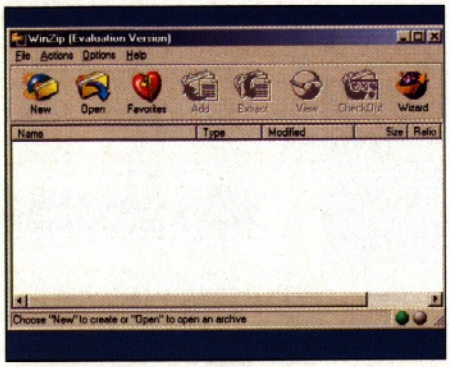


19 Spot the difference

You'll notice that a marker showing the total length of the tracks currently selected has appeared at the bottom. Nero automatically calculates the length of time each MP3 will take up once converted.

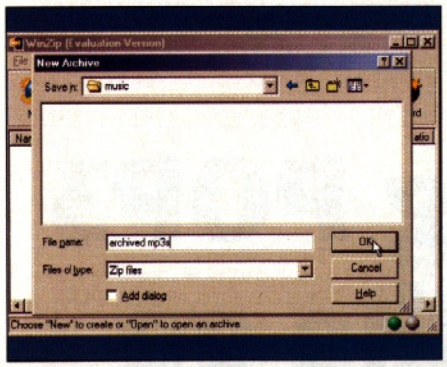
20 A burned CD

Once you've built up your compilation, you can burn it to disc. After this, the written CD becomes just like any other audio CD. We think Windows Media Player is the best player to use for playing CDs, so it'll look something like this.



21 Zipping up MP3s

If you work in an office, your bosses might not be pleased to see you storing gigabytes of music on your work PC. Another way of avoiding being caught, aside from burning to CD, is to zip your MP3s into an archive only you can access.

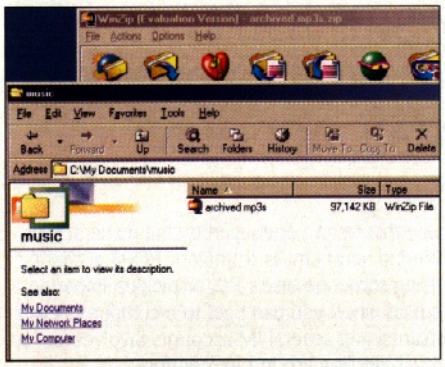


22 A new archive

Install WinZip from the cover CD, then go into 'WinZip Classic' mode. This allows you to create your own archive from scratch. Click on 'New' in the main toolbar, then browse your hard drive for somewhere to create a Zip file.

23 Add files

You can click 'Add' in the toolbar, but we find it easier to drag and drop files into the WinZip interface to add files. Set the compression to 'Maximum' – it won't actually make that much difference as MP3s are already heavily compressed.

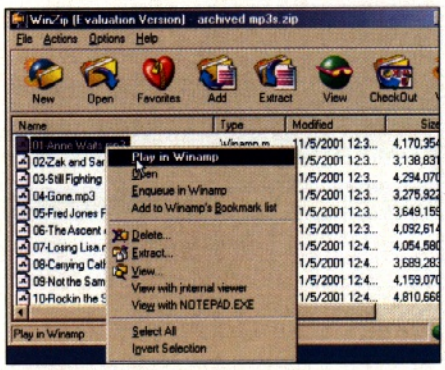


24 The archive

Once you've added your files, you can remove the original MP3s from your hard drive, so the only place they exist is in the Zip file. Obviously, this looks like any other archived file, meaning that others don't see a huge list of MP3s.

25 Access the music

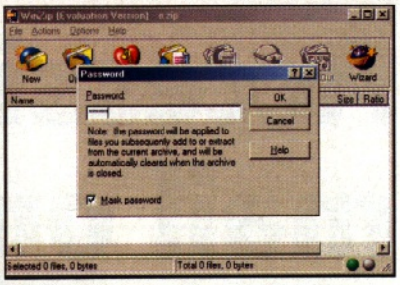
You can access your archived music any time you wish by double-clicking the Zip file. This will open up the WinZip program. Make sure you click on 'WinZip Classic' to see a list of the files held within the archive.



26 Play from within

In Classic mode, you can view the contents of the archive, and use them in the same way you would any other file. Right-click on any file, and you'll see that you can play it in Winamp, so you can keep your files zipped up while playing them.

Top Tip!



FOR AN ADDED realm of security and privacy, you can password protect your archive. If you select this, anyone trying to access your Zip file will need to enter the correct password before viewing the contents of the archive. No-one but you will be able to unzip the file either, so you can be guaranteed that your files are safe. You can add a password either on the 'Add files' dialog, or by clicking on the dedicated 'Password' option.

Jargon buster

Bitrate

The quality level at which an MP3 is encoded. This deals with a bits per second ratio, and can vary from 32kbps to 320kbps. For near CD quality, 128kbps will suffice, although audio perfectionists often prefer to encode at 196kbps – whether you notice the difference or not is an entirely different matter.

Remote database

This is basically as it sounds – a database stored on a remote location. This database is invaluable for accessing track information for CDs, and saves you the hassle of manually entering song and album titles. Once you've accessed the remote database, the downloaded information is stored on your PC – the 'local database'.

WinZip Classic/Wizard

These are the two modes of operation in WinZip. The former is the fully-functioning archiving section of the program, while the latter deals exclusively with the unzipping of previously-created archives. The WinZip Classic mode offers more features, but is far more difficult to use – the Wizard suffices for most people.

In brief:

Task: Use your POP3 email account on the Net
Software I need: None whatsoever
Difficulty: Beginner
Time I need: 10 minutes

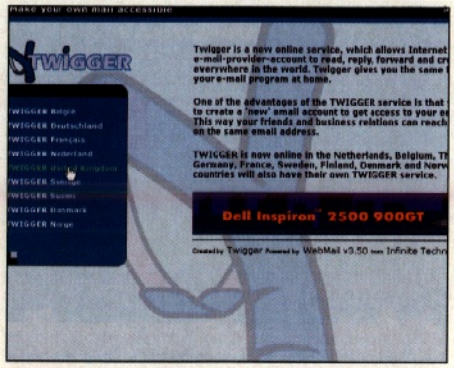
Accessing POP3 mail on the go with Twigger

THANKS TO THIS NATTY SITE YOU'RE NO LONGER TIED TO ONE PC WHEN YOU WANT ACCESS TO YOUR ISP EMAIL ACCOUNT

WAY BACK WHEN, everyone was chuffed to bits with their solitary email account. Times have changed, though, and Net savvy punters are now packing all manner of online communications tools in their Windows setup.

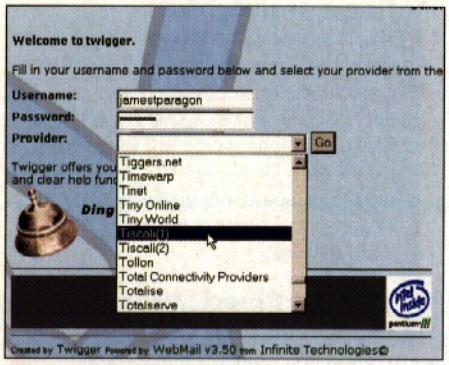
In fact, it's unusual to find someone these days who doesn't have a work email, a home email, and umpteen Webmail accounts. Once you add Instant Messenger accounts and SMS capabilities, you're looking at a whole lot of text-based messaging. Problems only arise when you try to access one form of messaging in a way that wasn't envisaged by the makers. Ever tried to send emails from your POP3 account using someone else's PC, or pick up important emails when you can't get to a computer? Even maintaining several IM accounts involves far too much fiddling around for comfort.

There are answers to these problems, however, and we show you the way forward on the next seven pages. First off, we'll tackle the problem of when you need to use your ISP email account, but can't get access to the PC the account was created on.

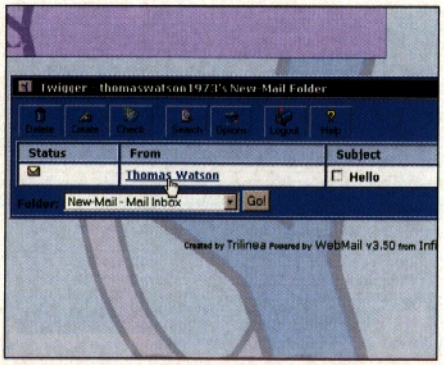


1 The Twigger site
As Twigger is based entirely online, you won't be surprised to learn that the first step involves visiting the Twigger site. You can find this at **www.twigger.com**. Once there, click on 'Twigger United Kingdom' to access the UK section.

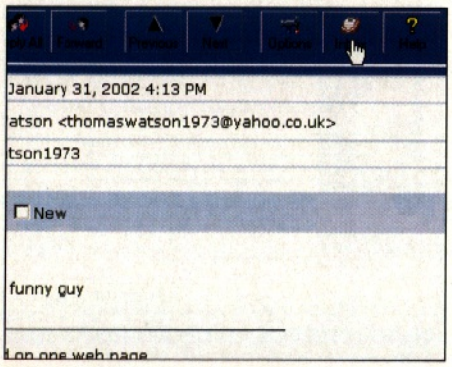
2 Username and password
On the next screen, you'll be asked to fill in the username and password you normally use to log into your mail server. The former is usually the first part of your email address, before the '@' sign. Enter each of these in the spaces provided.



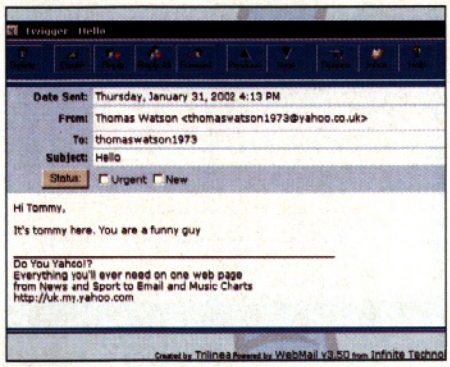
3 Which ISP?
You'll then be asked to choose your ISP from the drop-down list underneath your password. This list is updated regularly, so you should be able to find your current provider from the huge number of ISPs. Click 'Go' when finished.



4 View mail
This brings up the main message viewer, where you can see the email that's currently selected. This screen looks almost exactly like a Webmail message screen, with information on the sender, as well as time and date sent.

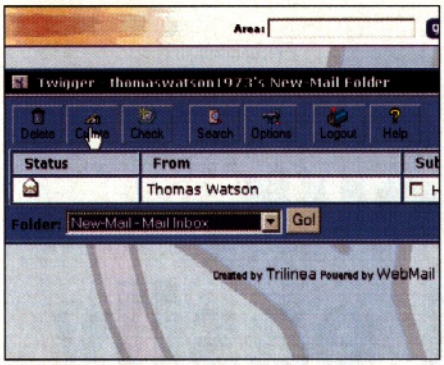


5 Message options
This screen also contains all the options you'd expect to find in an email client. Above the message itself, you'll see all the usual 'reply', 'delete' and 'forward' icons. But let's go back to the main screen again – click on 'Inbox' to do this.



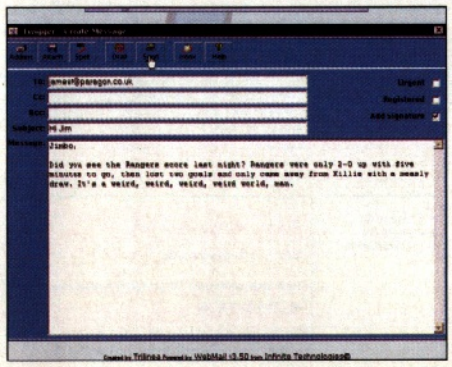
6 You're in

After a short delay, you will be logged into the Twigger online interface, which is where all of the action takes place. As you can see above, we have a new message, so click on either the 'from' or 'subject' fields of the message line.



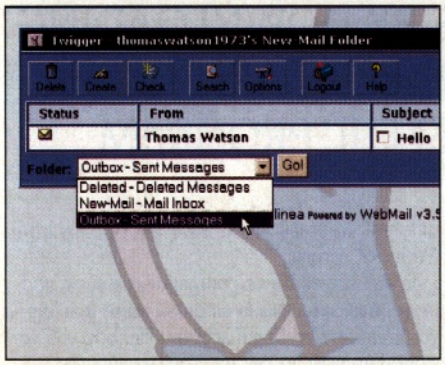
7 Create mail

To write a new email, click the 'Create' button at the top of the Inbox window. This performs the same function as the Compose icon in most Webmail services. Writing an email is the same as with virtually every other email client.



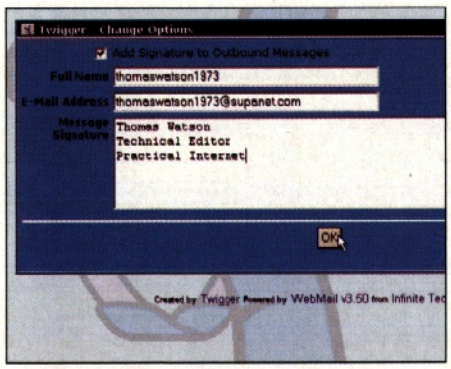
8 Advanced features

Twigger has a number of added extras. The best is probably the 'spelling' option, which checks your messages for errors. Another feature allows you to attach files. To send your missive hurtling through cyberspace, press the 'Send' button.



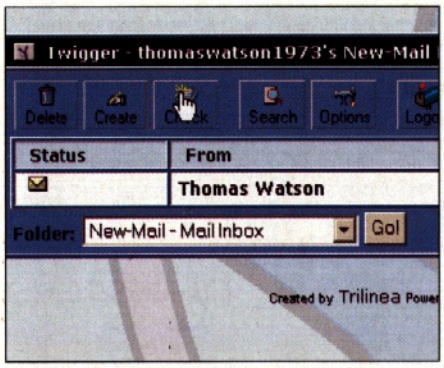
9 Move folders

Back on the home page, you can access any of the standard mail folders from the easy to use drop-down menu. This setting allows you to quickly navigate to the 'Outbox' and 'Deleted messages' folders, as well as the 'Inbox' section.



10 More options

Clicking the 'Options' button on the main Inbox screen brings up the above screen, which is really a 'signature' window. Here, you can give each of your outbound messages a standard ending, allowing you to personalise emails.



11 Check mail

Twigger contains a handy feature that's missing from many Webmail providers – a 'Check' button. Rather than having to refresh the page, this icon lets you check your mail in the time-honoured POP3 fashion, and makes it all much easier.

Always remember...

ALTHOUGH TWIGGER HAS been optimised to work with virtually every ISP on the go, some service providers require a bit more thought before you steam straight in. Here are a few points you should be aware of before entering your account details.

Freeserve

Entering your Freeserve details isn't that much different to the standard method. The only real difference is that, instead of simply entering your username in the space provided, you have to include the part after the '@' sign as well. This means you'd enter something like 'twatson76@fsnet.co.uk' as your username.

BT Internet

While Twigger allows you to leave your messages on the server for most POP3 accounts, this service is unavailable for BT Internet. In layman's terms, this means that you can't check your email on the Web, then view your messages in your standard email client.

Free-Online

Unfortunately, the reply address given by Twigger in any message you send using a Free-Online will be incorrect. Twigger suggests that you make a default signature to tell people of your genuine address to correct this problem.

In brief:

Task: Get to grips with JoMail
Software I need: JoMail
Difficulty: Beginner
Time I need: 15 minutes

ON THE CD

Access your Webmail easily with JoMail

SAVE TIME AND HASSLE BY DOWNLOADING MESSAGES FROM YOUR WEB-BASED EMAIL ACCOUNT INTO THIS USEFUL PROGRAM

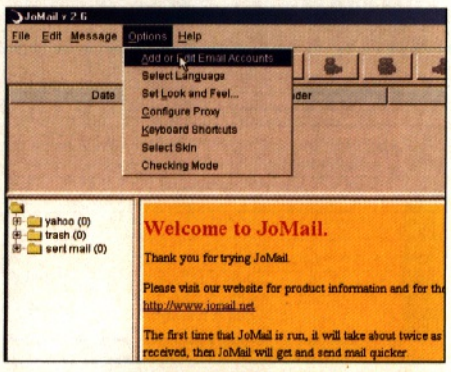
ANYONE WHO HAS signed up for a Web-based email account knows what a hassle it can be to access your messages. For a start, you have to quit out of your standard emailer, then open up your browser and navigate to the home page of the provider in question. All of this takes time, which could be spent on infinitely more interesting pursuits.

Outlook Express offers some consolation to Hotmail users, with its ability to incorporate the Microsoft-sponsored Webmail service into its operations. However, anyone who has a different Webmail account will get little joy from Outlook Express.

JoMail solves these compatibility issues, and more. Basically, this is an email client that lets you treat any Webmail account like one you've signed up with an ISP for. The benefits are obvious – no more traipsing along to slow-loading Web sites to use your email, and the ability to store all of your email accounts in one handy package. So, whatever your current Webmail service, boot up JoMail for a far more intuitive experience.

1 Running JoMail

After installing JoMail, double click the MS-DOS icon on your desktop. JoMail doesn't actually run in DOS mode, and will start up in Windows. Don't worry about the sparse interface – this is less important than the features of the program.

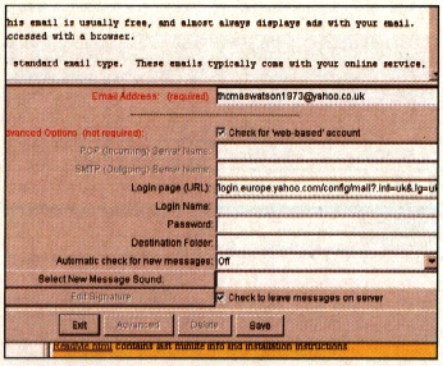


2 A new account

An email client with no accounts set up on it is close to useless, so let's start adding Webmail accounts into JoMail. To do this, go to the main menu, choose 'Options', then select 'Add or edit email accounts'

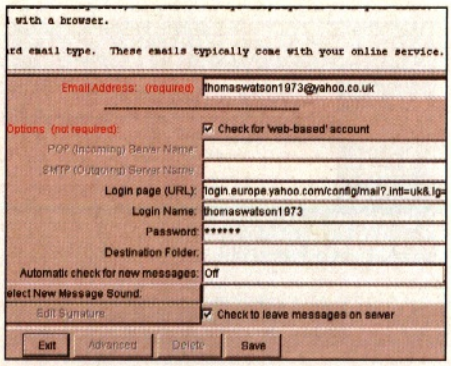
3 First details

On the account entry screen, enter the email address of the Webmail account you wish to use. Below this, make sure you tick the 'Web-based' box, as this changes many of the options to suit this particular type of account.



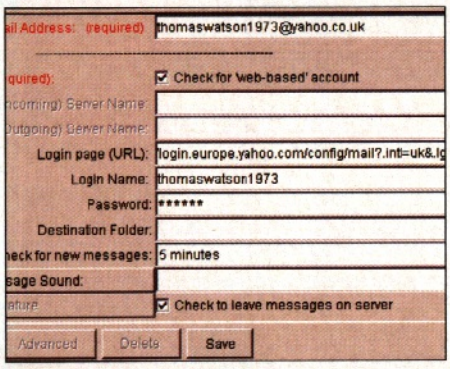
4 More email info

After doing this, copy and paste the URL of your Web-based email service. This is usually a long, difficult to remember address, which is why we're going to copy and past it into the 'Login page' field.



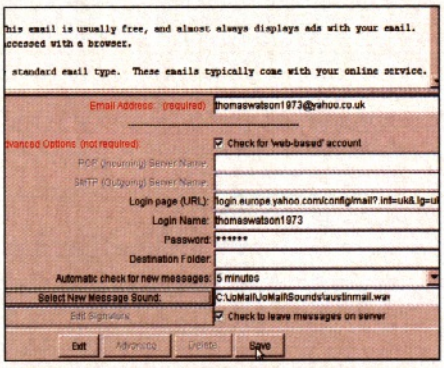
5 Sign-in details

Next up, enter the login name and password for your Webmail account. With all these elements in place, you should now be ready to send and receive email using this account, but first let's tweak JoMail to work exactly as we want it to.



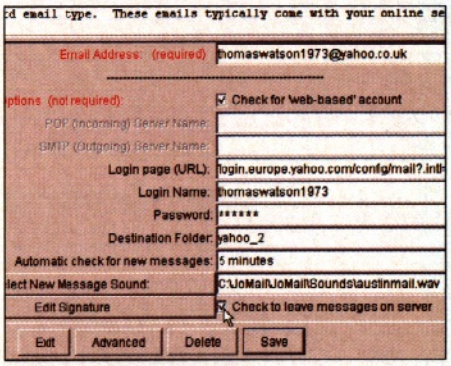
6 Auto checking

One of the most useful elements within JoMail is the ability to automatically check for new mail at set intervals. This can be set to a variety of timescales by clicking on any number within the drop-down menu, as shown above.



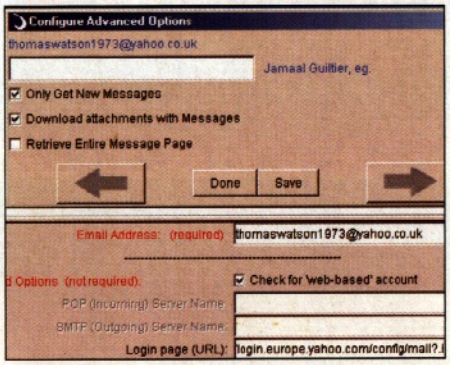
7 New message sound

Sound alerts can be irritating, but it's worth turning them on in JoMail. This is because you can set a different alert according to each account. Click 'New message sound', then browse for a relevant .WAV file. Click 'Save' to, um, save.



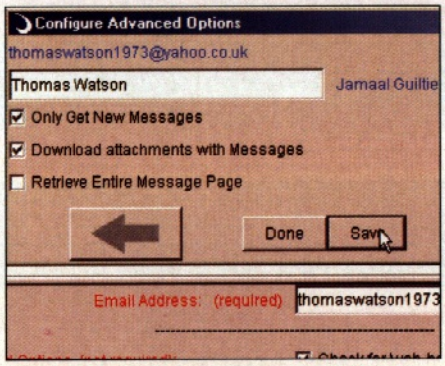
8 Leave on server

One thing to look out for is the 'Leave on server' button. This ensures that any messages you view will still be available for viewing in the standard Webmail format, and is a good safeguard for being able to look at your emails anywhere.



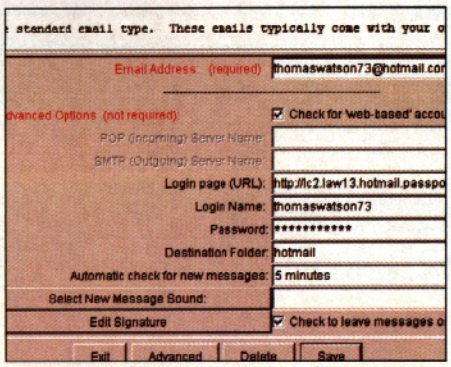
9 Advanced options

Once you've saved your settings, you can access extra options by clicking the 'Advanced' button. This section allows you to specify different settings for different users, but we'll use it to configure our email account to work better.



10 Set the options

Tick the top box or you'll be presented with old emails every time you log on. We'd also recommend ticking the 'Download attachments' box. The last option relates to viewing the whole HTML of the original email, and is less important.

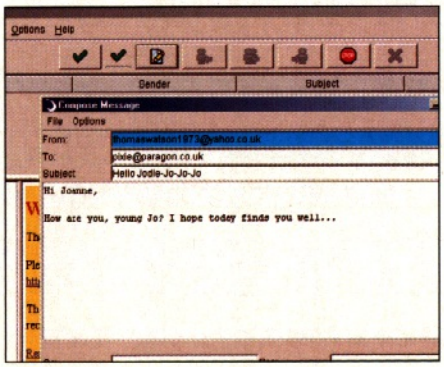


11 More accounts

To add more accounts to JoMail, simply repeat the previous steps. You can mix and match Web-based and POP3 accounts as you please, and each is allowed to have its own unique settings and options.

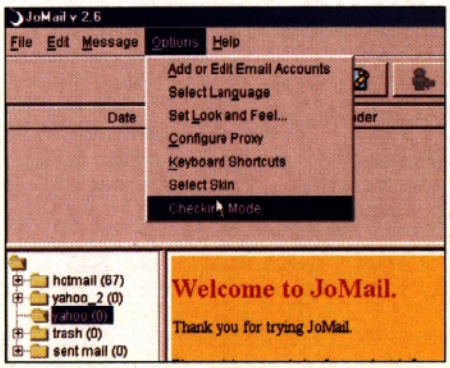
12 Check for mail

The first time you use any account in JoMail, you're better off checking for mail in that account only. To do this, click on the 'Get mail from' button in the main toolbar, then select the account to use.



13 Compose messages

To write a new message, click the 'Send mail' button in the main toolbar, then compose your message as you would in any other email client. You can choose any account by selecting the appropriate one in the drop down menu.



14 Checking mode

One of JoMail's finest features is the Checking Mode which enables you to minimise all program windows, leaving only a small ticker on the desktop. This flags up any new messages as soon as they arrive.

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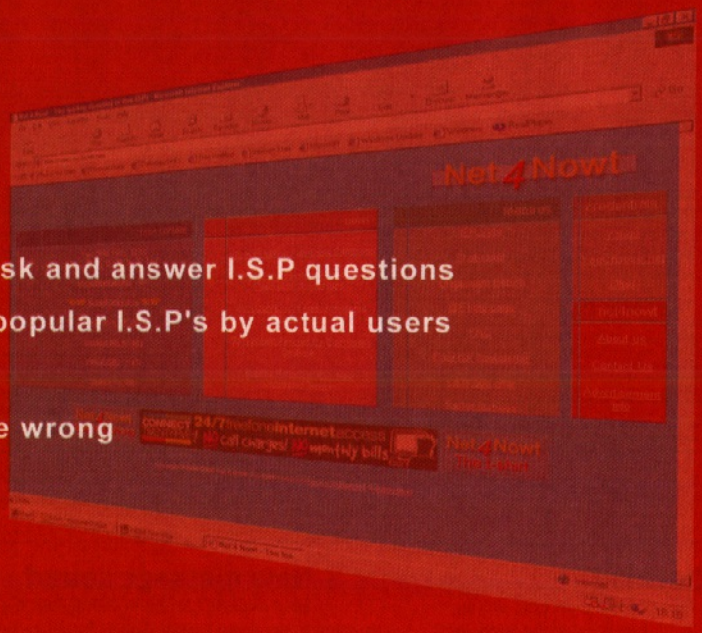

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Net4Nowt

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>Domain Registered in your name
>Email support

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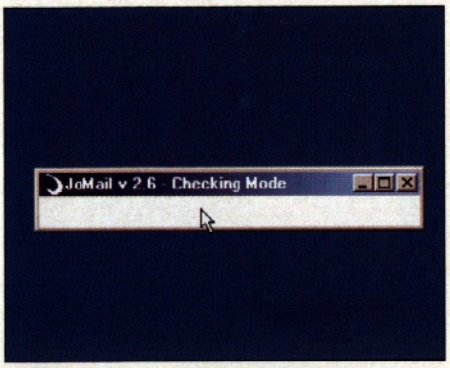
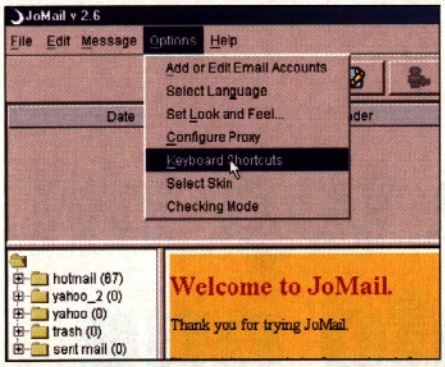


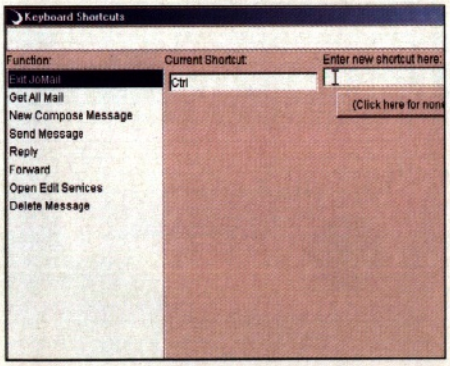
15 To standard mode

Whenever you're in Checking Mode, you can easily return to the standard window at any time. To do this, either left or right click anywhere within the Checking window, and you'll be taken back to the main interface.



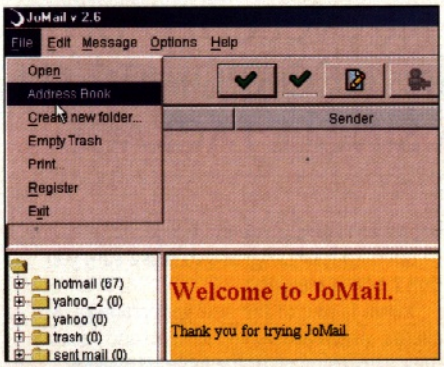
16 Keyboard shortcuts

JoMail has a variety of keyboard shortcuts pre-installed. The major benefit of JoMail's shortcuts is that you can change them all to suit your needs. You can access the shortcuts window by going to 'Options' then 'Keyboard shortcuts'.



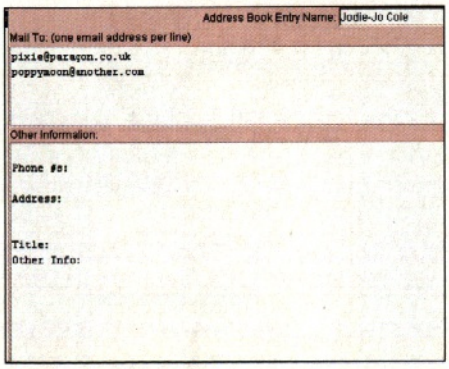
17 Change shortcuts

To change any of the default shortcuts, click on it in the list. This shows you the current shortcut on the left, with space for any possible changes on the right. Now click on the box on the right, and type the new shortcut in to change it.



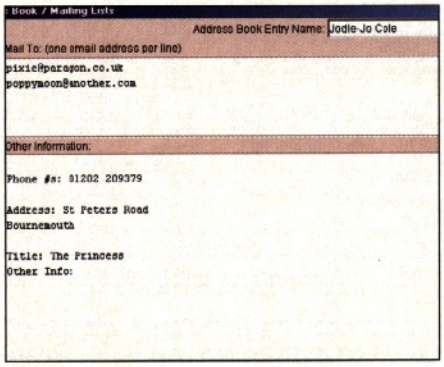
18 Address book

JoMail also has a good range of features based around the standard Address Book functionality. To access this set of functions at any time, click on the main menu, and choose 'File', then 'Address Book'.



19 Add entries

To add an address book entry, type a name for the entry in the 'name' field at the top of the window, then add the email address of the person involved below. You can include as many as you like, as long as you stick to one per line.

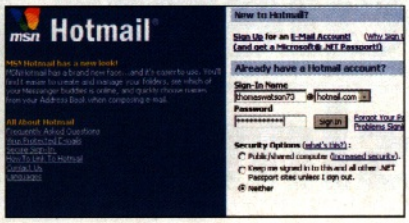


20 Other information

After entering the all-important email addresses, you can enter other relevant information about your contact in the spaces provided. Once you've done this, click on 'Save' to store this in JoMail's memory, for future access.

Webmail options

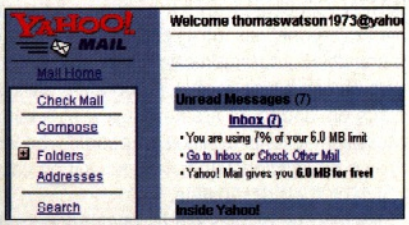
MANY PEOPLE HAVE always stuck to Hotmail as their only Webmail option, mainly because it could interact with Outlook Express. JoMail offers the opportunity to fully integrate virtually any kind of Web-based email account you like, which means you can treat any account like a POP3 account. Here are a few that you should be considering.



Hotmail

www.hotmail.com

Who cares about its negative connotations with being a Microsoft product? This is still the most popular Webmail service in the world. Make sure you turn the filter on before you set up JoMail to work with your Hotmail account, though, or you'll find yourself with 400 junk emails every day.



Yahoo!

http://uk.yahoo.com

Signing up for a Yahoo! account gives you full access to the range of Yahoo! site features, including entry to the huge Yahoo! chat arena. You also get a more substantial than normal 6Mb of storage to play with. (Anyone who's used Hotmail will appreciate the difference this can make.)

Lycos

www.lycos.co.uk

Currently jam-packed with users after Excite UK's demise, Lycos currently offers the standard fayre as far as Webmail goes, with a nice line in standard POP3 email client integration to boot.

In brief:

Task: Use Trillian for a better IM experience
Software I need: Trillian 0.72
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 20 minutes

ON THE CD

Pack five top IM clients into one simple program

USING TRILLIAN, WHICH IS INCLUDED ON THE COVER CD, YOU CAN INCORPORATE ALL YOUR IM NEEDS INTO A SINGLE PACKAGE

WHEN ICQ BURST onto the scene a few years ago, everyone was intrigued by the concept of being able to communicate almost in real-time with an email type format. Good ideas always catch on, and there are now a slew of Instant Messaging clients available to people who've grown dissatisfied with having to wait on emails reaching their destination.

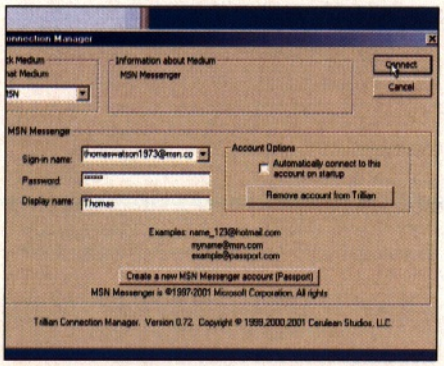
Each of the biggies has its own unique selling point, designed to make it more appealing than its rivals. The trouble here is that it's far too easy to end up with an account with each of the big players, giving you the headache of having to open up four programs to make sure you don't miss a message.

Trillian is one of the new generation of IM clients, which allows you to send and receive messages using all of the large messaging networks. This way, you can combine your ICQ, Yahoo! MSN and AIM needs into one compact and handy program. What's more, it's as fully featured as any of these, and won't ever leave you wishing you could use your original program again.

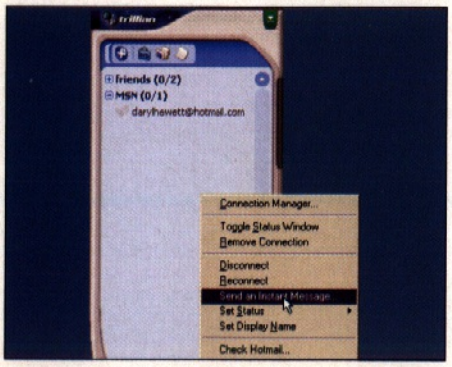
1 The Trillian interface
After installing Trillian, you'll be presented with this screen. Fully skinnable, this interface will soon contain contacts from a wide variety of chat networks. As we'll now show you, entering the information required to do this is surprisingly easy.

2 Choose a client
You'll see five small icons at the bottom of the main window, each relating to an IM network. Clicking any of these gives you a range of options for that particular chat client. This way, you can enter different chat networks with the same program.

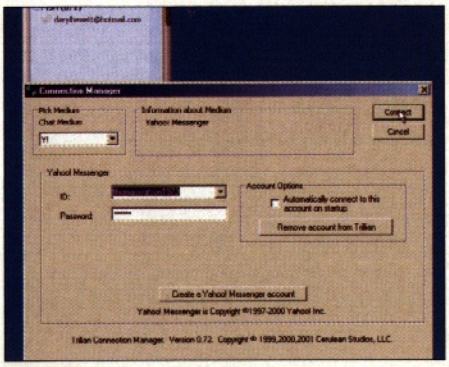
3 Add MSN details
In order to set up Trillian, we'll have to enter account information for each of the clients. If you don't have an account, you can sign up from within the Trillian interface. Right click on the MSN icon, and choose 'Connection Manager'.



4 Account info
In the dedicated window, enter the information for your MSN account. Make sure you enter the full address of your MSN passport, and not just the username. Notice you can also set up a new account by clicking the button at the bottom.

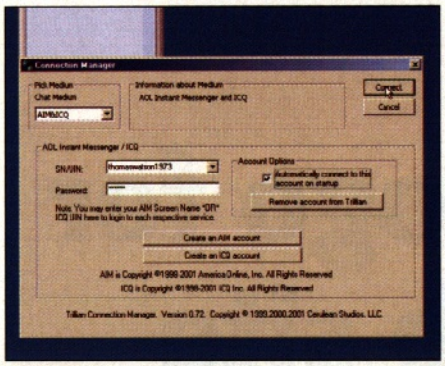


5 Using MSN
After a brief delay, you'll see the main window has changed slightly. The MSN logo is now coloured in, and your Friends list has been imported from your account. For a full list of options, click on the MSN logo.



6 More accounts

Adding an IRC, AIM and Yahoo! Messenger account follows exactly the same principles – all you need do is enter your username and password, and Trillian will automatically import your Friends list into the program.



7 ICQ accounts

The only real difference with ICQ is that you'll have to enter your unique account number, instead of a username. As with all other account types, ticking the relevant box ensures that the connection is made every time you start up Trillian.

8 Full house

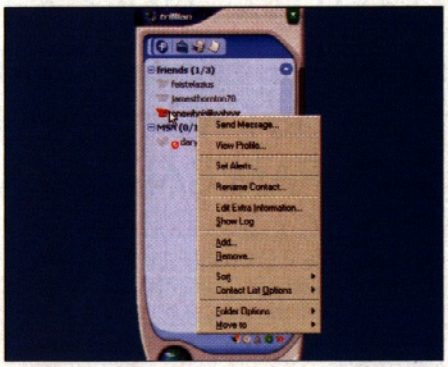
We've entered accounts for all but the IRC client into Trillian. The good thing here is that you can have multiple accounts for each service as well, which can then be accessed by clicking the relevant icon and choosing the account.

9 Send a message

Once you've entered all of your accounts, the program will generate a Contacts list for your Instant Messaging portfolio, making it easier than ever to send a message. Double click any contact to send a message in the native client's format.

10 Message options

When the message window appears, you'll notice that although you are actually working within the realms of an individual chat client, the Trillian look is carried on. Another plus point (maybe) is the huge range of emoticons available.



11 Contact options

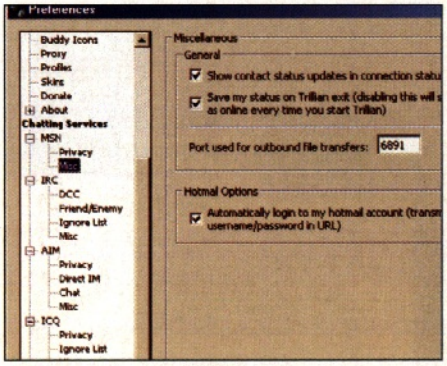
Back in the main Contacts list, you can right click on any name to bring up a menu of further options. Again, these are specific to the client involved, but the general principle is that you get more advanced choices in this menu.

12 Global settings

As well as a number of client-specific options, Trillian also has a range of settings you can tinker with which alter the program as a whole. Accessible through the world icon at the bottom, these options are known as 'global settings'.

13 Preferences

Like any top quality program, Trillian has a range of settings that would impress anyone. You can access these by clicking the 'Globe' icon and choosing 'Preferences'. The first few options relate to the general running of Trillian.



14 Specific options

Further down the list of Preferences, you'll see a collection of options to optimise the way you use any of the clients Trillian deals with. This is especially good for setting your 'ignore' filters, and for adjusting some of the more advanced options.

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In brief:
Task: Make a site logo with Flash
Software I need: Coffee Cup Firestarter
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 30 minutes

Make a logo for your Web site with Firestarter

FLASH WAS ONCE A TRICKY AND EXPENSIVE AFFAIR – THEN FIRESTARTER WAS BORN. FIND OUT HOW THIS USER-FRIENDLY PROGRAM CAN LIVEN UP YOUR SITE

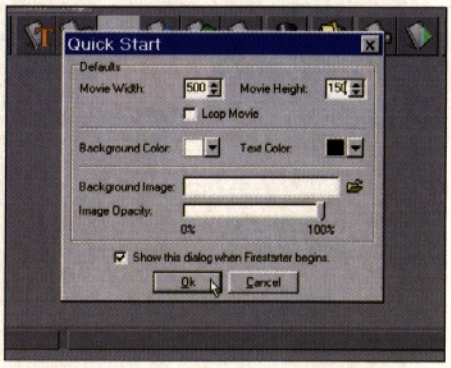
WITH THE FLASH plug-in enjoying near-universal usage, it's now safer than ever to build parts of your site with Flash. Most Web users will already have the Flash plug-in installed, leaving Web builders free to experiment with Flash effects.

Even if you're not sure what Flash is, you've almost certainly seen it used on the Net. In simple terms, it is a file format like GIF or JPEG, but it can do much more than either of them. Flash makes it easy to create animated Web content without producing enormous files that take an age to download. This is partly down to its use of vector graphics (see 'Jargon Buster').

Although it started life as an expensive developer's tool, Flash can now be created using a number of cheaper software solutions like Firestarter, which is featured here and available for free trial download from **www.coffeecup.com**. As shown in this tutorial, it can produce an impressive range of animated effects, and allows the use of styled text, imported images and various shapes in the Flash movies it creates.

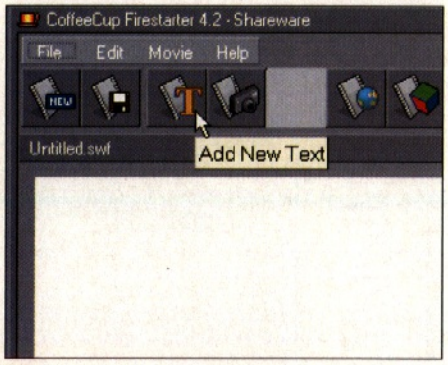
1 Launch Firestarter

Once you've downloaded the software and installed it, you'll see this splash screen on first launch. The trial version is fully functional, with the only limitation being that a small 'trial software' message appears on all exported Flash movies.



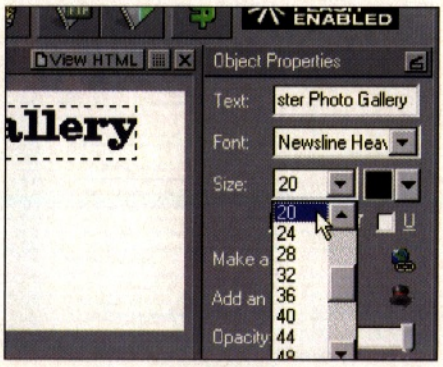
2 Make your first movie

For the logo in this tutorial, a movie size of 500 by 150 pixels is about right. You can also set background and default text colour here, although everything can be easily altered later if you change your mind. Click 'OK' to get going.



3 Add some text

Most of the key Firestarter features are controlled from the button bar underneath the menus. You can make the button name pop up by hovering your mouse pointer over a button for a second. We're starting our movie with some text.



4 Set text properties

A new text box will pop up. If you start typing, it will replace the standard text with your own message. Font size and style can be set in the right-hand side of the window. Unfortunately, each text box can only be one line in one style.

5 Add a special text effect

With the text in place, we can apply a special effect. Effects can be applied individually to each component in the movie. Use the timeline at the bottom of the window to control their duration and start point. Click the 'hat' button to begin.

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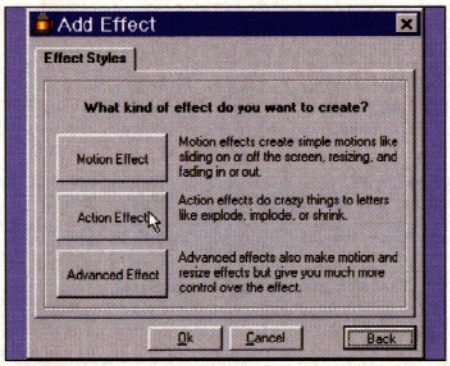
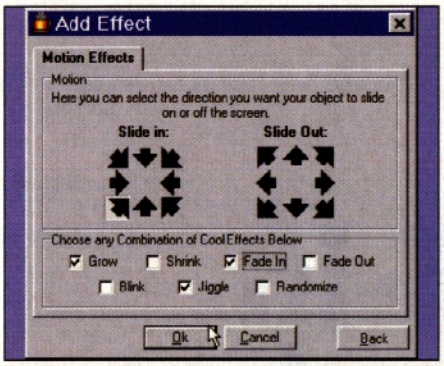


6 Pick a style, any style

Three different effect styles are available. Motion Effects handles any motion, while Action Effects are a range of preset 'crazy things' like explosions. These can be combined in the Advanced Effect section.



7 Motion Effects

We're going to use a Motion Effect for the text, so it makes a grand entrance to the movie when first loaded. You can easily alter these settings later, so feel free to play around. Click 'OK' to return to the main editing window.

8 Get graphical

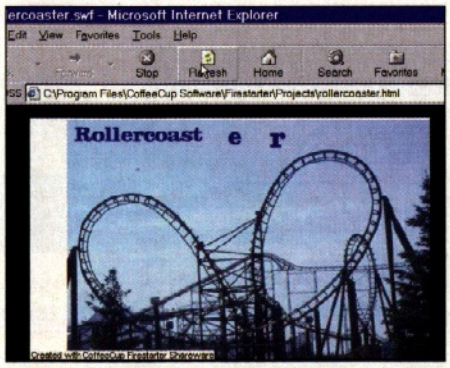
Although Flash is designed to work with vector graphics, Firestarter's graphic facility centres around bitmap graphics. We're going to import a picture of a rollercoaster to go in the background and start by clicking the 'Camera' button.

9 Reset size and layer order

Importing an image automatically increases the movie to the size of the image. Resolve this by clicking the button to the right of 'Object Properties' and re-entering the original size. Layer order is controlled by the arrow buttons, shown above.

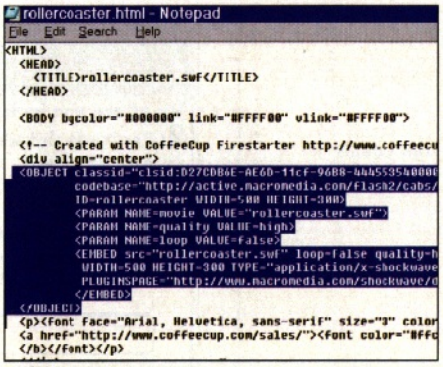
10 Work with the timeline

We've created an effect for the rollercoaster image now, and want to alter the start point for the text effect. This is easily done by clicking and dragging the corresponding effect to a different position on the timeline, as shown above.



11 Preview the movie

You have to preview the movie in a Web browser to see the effects, by clicking the green 'Play' arrow in the button bar. The first time you do this, you'll have to tell the program where to save the Flash movie on your hard drive.



12 Paste it into your site

The preview contains the code needed to place the movie into your Web page. Right-click the page, select 'View Source' and copy and paste the code into your Web page. Make sure the 'SWF' file saved earlier is in the same folder as your Web page.

Jargon buster

Movie

The document that you create in Flash – ie the '.swf' file – is called a 'movie', regardless of whether it involves animation.

Vector graphics

A type of graphic which Flash is mainly designed to use. They are described in terms of the shapes that make them up, meaning they can be displayed at all different sizes without appearing jagged.

Bitmap graphics

Bitmaps are described by the individual pixels that make up the graphic, meaning that enlargement makes them lose precision. These can be used in movies if desired, as we showed in this tutorial by importing a graphic into the movie.

Top Tip!

FIRESTARTER ALSO OFFERS a rather nifty conversion facility, which allows you to convert any Flash movie into animated GIF format. This can be useful if you want to provide an alternative to the Flash movie for site visitors without the plug-in, although animated GIF conversions are likely to be bigger than their Flash equivalents. You can access this feature by clicking the 'GIF' button in the main Firestarter window.

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In brief:

Task: Create a form and check its contents
Software I need: None (HTML coding)
Difficulty: Advanced
Time I need: 45 minutes

Make fill-in forms work your way

TAKE CONTROL OF THE FORMS ON YOUR WEB SITE WITH PRE-SUBMISSION CHECKING

ALLOWING VISITORS TO contact you via your Web site needs to be based around a form structure if it's to be done properly. This poses no problem for the visitor, as they type straight into the Web page, and it also makes life easier for you, because the structure of their response can be designed to your preferences. To make sure the form is correctly filled in, a script can be used to check it prior to submission. Unfortunately there's little that can be done to prevent users from typing in incorrect information to fool the script. This tutorial builds on previous forms tutorials by explaining how to enable and disable individual fields according to user input.

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Form Checking Script</title>
<script language="JavaScript">
<!– //

function formcheck(myform) {

var empty = 0;

        for (var i = 0; i < myform.elements.length; i++)
```

1 Set up the script

Our function is called formcheck, and is hidden from older browsers using the normal <!– // and // –> notation. First of all we define a variable called empty and set its value at zero to determine if any areas of the form have been left empty.

```
        {
                if (myform.elements[i].value == "") {
                        alert("The form
was not completed. Please check all fields have been completed and
click Submit again.")
                        empty++
                        break
                }
        }
```

2 Check for missing data

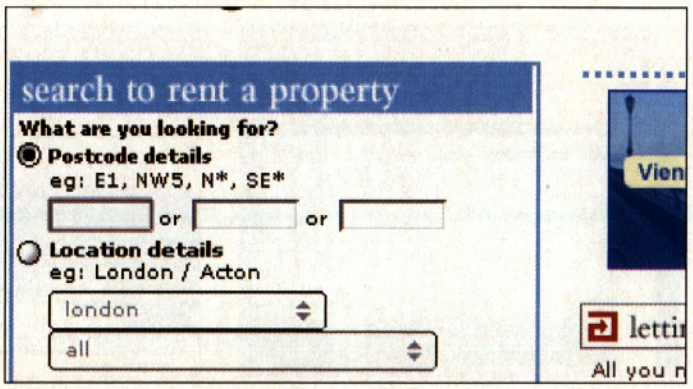
The code shown here is the entire content of the 'for' loop created in step one. The variable 'i' is used to point to a particular form element. The 'if' statement checks whether the particular form element is empty. When it is, an alert is displayed, the variable empty is added to, and the 'if' loop is stopped.

```
if (empty == 0) {

 myform.submit()
 alert("Thank you for completing the form. Your details
are being sent.")
 }
}
```

3 Submit the completed form

This section is be reached when the loop has finished or broken (ie an empty element has been detected). If the loop finished, the variable 'empty' will still equal zero. We test for this with an 'if' statement. When the 'if' statement is true, the form is submitted and an alert appears explaining what has happened.



4 Disable and enable form fields

It is useful for the Web designer to disable form fields in certain situations. An example is shown above from **www.thisislondon.co.uk**. The function created earlier in this tutorial does not require disabled fields to be completed before the form's submission can take place.

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```
function enabler(which) {
        which.disabled=false;
        which.value="";
}

function disabler(which) {
        which.disabled=true;
        which.value="None";
}

// –>
</script>
</head>
```

5 Scripting the disable / enable functions

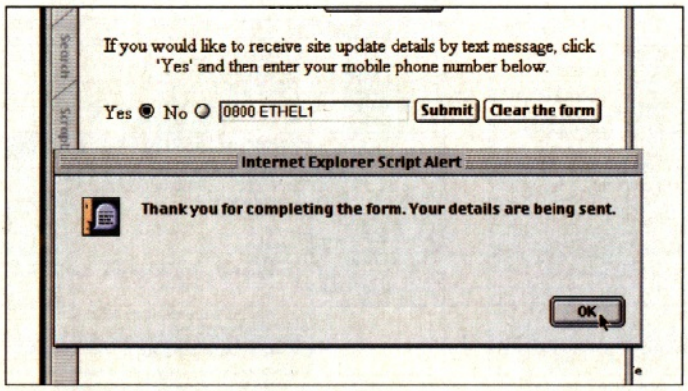
This code should be entered after the function created in the first three steps of the tutorial. Basically, these functions have opposite effects. The first will make a field active, whereas the second will disable it. The last three lines of code close off the script and <head> sections of our Web page.

```
<p>If you would like to receive site update details by text message, click 'Yes'
and then enter your mobile phone number below.</p>
Yes <input type="radio" name="phonecheck" value="yes"
onclick="enabler(document.myform.phoneno)"> No <input type="radio"
name="phonecheck" value="no" checked
onclick="disabler(document.myform.phoneno)">
<input type="text" name="phoneno" value="None" disabled>

<input type="button" name="clickalong" value="Submit"
onClick="formcheck()">
<input type="reset" value="Clear the form">
</form>
</center>
</body>
</html>
```

7 Polish off the code

The first section of this is sensitive to the user's input. Basically, the 'Yes' button will enable an initially greyed-out text input box when it is clicked. The reverse will happen when 'No' button is clicked. The second section creates submit and reset buttons, and then finishes off the page code.



8 Test the script

Save the file and load it into a browser. If you try and submit it without completing both text boxes and selecting an option from the pull-down menu, an alert will appear. The same will happen if you click the tick box but don't complete the text box. If the form is complete, a message will confirm it's being sent.

```
<body><center>
<i>Please answer these questions to join our site's mailing
list</i><p>

<form action="http://www.response-o-matic.com/cgi-bin/rom.pl"
method="post" name="myform">
<input type="hidden" name="your_email_address"
value="james@bright-choice.co.uk">
<input type="hidden" name="your_name" value="James">
<input type="hidden" name="email_subject_line" value="form
response">

Name <input type="text" name="visitor_name"><p>
Email <input type="text" name="visitor_email_address"><p>
Gender <select name="gender">
<option value="">Select one<option value="Male">Male<option
value="Female">Female
</select>
```

6 Get started on the form itself

With the script in place, we need to create a form and link it to the script. The code above is divided into three main sections. The first introduces the form, the second is code that remains invisible to the user. Obviously you need to swap the settings shown for your own.

Web resources

WebCoder Scriptorium
www.webcoder.com/scriptorium
A wide range of examples of how to jazz up your site with JavaScript.

WebMonkey JavaScript
http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/programming/javascript
An excellent range of in-depth tutorials.

JavaScript Developer Central
http://developer.netscape.com/tech/javascript/index.html
Detailed coverage of JavaScript from this leading browser maker.

JavaScript Source
http://javascript.internet.com
Thousands of scripts available for free download.

Jargon buster

Form element
JavaScript considers the input tags of a form as 'elements'. They can be referenced numerically, counting up from zero for the first one.

'If' statement
This allows a conditional situation to be tested for and a section of script to be run if the condition is found to be true (for example, x does equal seven). This can be extended using 'else' statements that run sections of code if the situation is found to be false (eg, x does not equal seven).

'For' statement
Used to create a loop when the script needs to repeat the same task with a slight variation. The number of times the loop runs depends on the conditions set in the 'for' statement. Here, we set up a simple count-up device that runs the loop once for each element of the form.

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In brief:

Task: Create a Java presentation
Software I need: WireFusion 2.0
Difficulty: Intermediate
Time I need: 30 minutes

ON THE CD

Create an interactive presentation

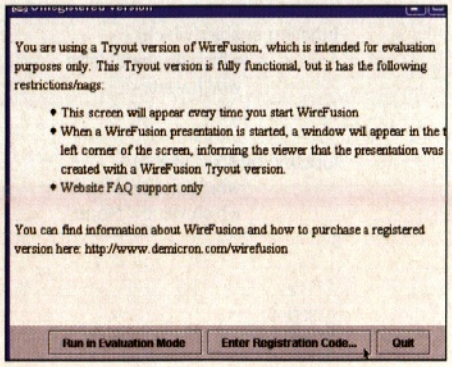
USING WIREFUSION, WEB DESIGNERS CAN GAIN THE BENEFITS OF JAVA WITHOUT THE HIDEOUS LEARNING CURVE

WHATEVER YOUR REASON for presenting data, it's always important to provide it in an appropriate format for the target audience. Although products such as PowerPoint allow for a certain amount of interaction, programs that are intended for desktop use do make it tricky to get the right result for the Internet.

Things get even more complicated the minute you try to introduce 3D elements to your presentation. Three-dimensional models are instantly more appealing than 2D efforts, but are difficult to produce using PowerPoint.

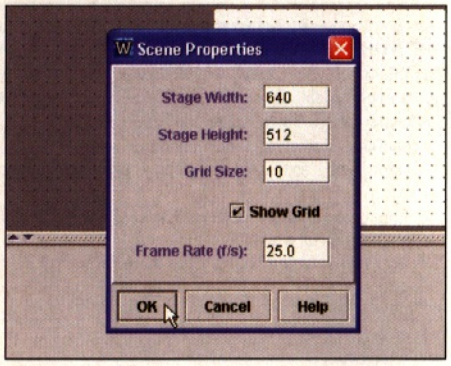
WireFusion is a tool for the creation of interactive product presentations in both 2D and 3D for the Web. The program allows you to work with images, texts, and real-time filters (as you do in Photoshop) then wire the individual objects together activating them through either a keyboard or mouse trigger.

We've explained here how to produce a simple interactive product presentation, but should you wish to delve into the depths of 3D, please refer to the WireFusion manual. It's located within the WireFusion folder on your hard disk.



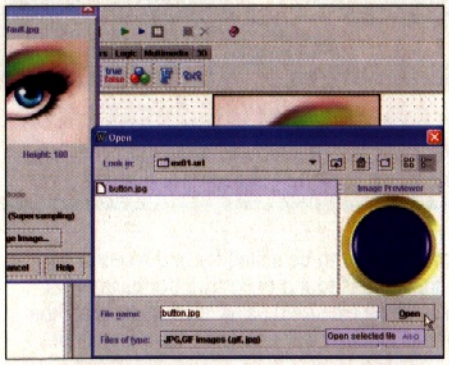
1 Getting started

Install WireFusion from the cover disc, then launch your browser and enter **www.demicron.com/practicalinternet**. Follow the instructions to register and a key will be emailed to you. Launch WireFusion and enter the registration code.



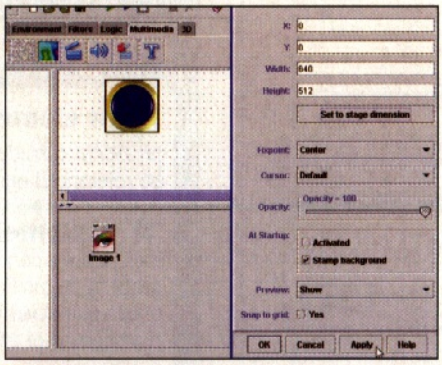
2 Create a new project

Relaunch WireFusion to bring up a blank document. We need to resize the space available to fit the project being produced – in this case a presentation of a variety of publications. Click 'Project', 'Scene Properties' and enter as shown.



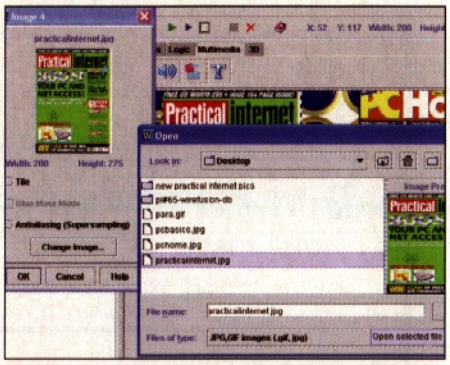
3 Add a background image

Add a picture to the backdrop to make it interesting. Do this by dragging an Image object from the Multimedia folder of the Objects menu into the work area. Double-click the image object, click 'Tile', 'Change Image' and locate an image.



4 Resize the image

Now the image is in place, resize it to fill the in the presentation window. Click on the image and click 'Set to stage dimension'. Ensure that the At Startup value 'Stamp Background' is selected, but not 'Activated' and click 'OK'.



5 The presentation body

It's now time to style the main body of your presentation. You can use the text tool to add text, but you may get better results from a graphics package. Following the process described earlier, add image objects for your subject matter.

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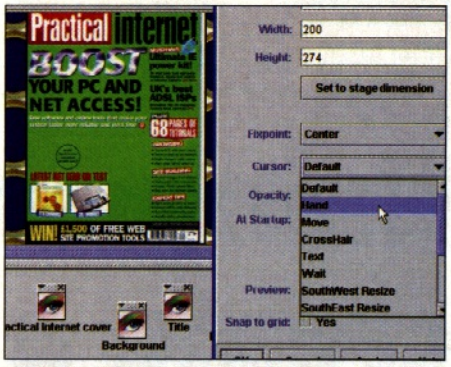
6 Alter the labels

As you add more objects, you'll start to lose track of which objects contain which images, sounds, and so on. To alter the label given to any object, click the text description underneath it. You can then give it a more descriptive label.

7 Insert a Mouse Area

We want to provide further information on a magazine when the user clicks a cover. To do this, we need to add a Mouse Area to the project. Drag it from the folder into the main work area, and adjust the size so it covers the first image.

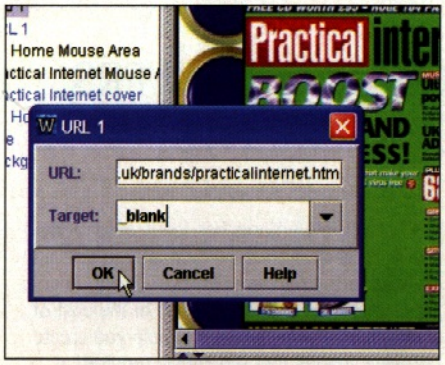


8 Mouse Area properties

Double-click within the Mouse Area frame to open its properties. Click the 'Cursor' tab, and move down to Hand. When the user moves the mouse over the image, the cursor will change from the mouse pointer to a hand. Name the Mouse Area.

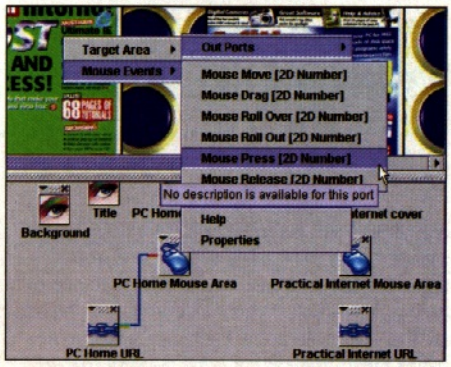
9 Copy and Paste

Right-click on the Mouse Area within the main program window. Move the pointer to Copy, Paste. Within the document, you'll find a duplicate of the original Mouse Area, which can be used to cover other images. Rename them as appropriate.



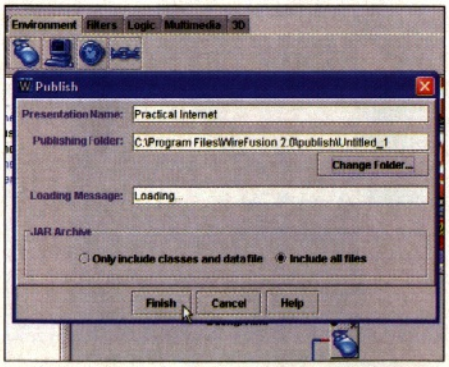
10 Link to a URL

When a visitor moves their mouse above a picture, we want to link to a Web page with details about that product. This means adding URL objects to the page from the Environment folder. Once in the work area, add the URL and enter '_blank'.



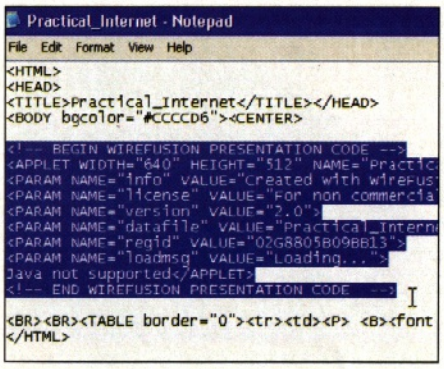
11 Connect it all together

Now the basic objects are together, they need to interact. Right-click the 'Mouse Area' object. Follow across 'Out Ports', 'Mouse Events' and choose 'Mouse Press'. Open the menu of the URL object; follow 'In Ports' across and select 'Load URL'.



12 Save and Publish

When you're happy, click 'File', 'Save Project As' and enter a filename. Once control is returned to you, click 'Project', 'Publish' and provide the details requested by WireFusion. Your presentation will be placed on your hard disk. Exit WireFusion.



13 Import your Applet

Now add the applet to a Web page. Launch Notepad and open the HTML file that's just been created. Copy everything we've highlighted in the screenshot, and paste it to a suitable location within your own Web page. Save and view within IE.

14 Try it out!

Use your Web browser to open your Web site either locally or (having uploaded it to some suitable space) via the Internet. You can now fully test your JAVA applet, if necessary returning to WireFusion for later fine-tuning.

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In brief:

Task: Create a layered Web site
Software I need: Photoshop Elements
Difficulty: Advanced
Time I need: 1.5 hours

ON THE CD

Using layers to create a killer home page

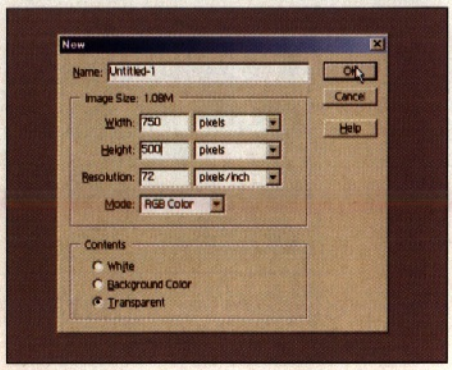
FASHION A STUNNING HOME PAGE BY TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE LAYERS FEATURE OF PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS

A HOME PAGE is the first page that any visitor will see when they arrive at your site. You should never underestimate the importance of a home page – it sets the look and feel of the site for the visitor. Scrappy, badly designed home pages mean that even if great content follows on other pages, the visitor may not be that bothered about sticking around.

With this in mind, we are going to show you how to create an attractive home page that can be broken down later and reassembled into a table for importing to your HTML page.

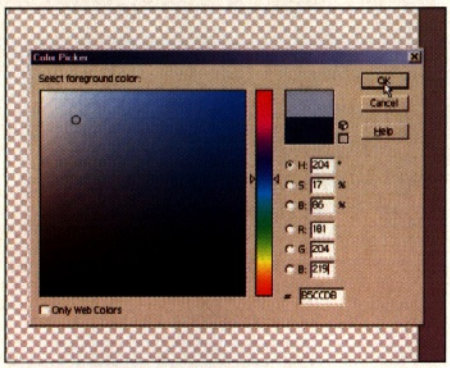
Photoshop Elements has loads of great time-saving tools and effects which let you get creative, bringing a high level of design to your site. What's more, it's a fraction of the cost of Photoshop. The program can help you create complex shapes that previously required a vector drawing package such as Adobe Illustrator to produce. This enables you to build various shapes for your interface all within the one package.

Let's get to work and start to create that inspirational interface.



1 Set up the image

When you start Photoshop Elements you will be presented with this dialog box. Select a new document and set it up to be about the size of an average browser window, which is 750 pixels wide and 500 pixels high.



2 Colour me in

Double-click the foreground colour on the tool bar to edit the foreground colour. Enter the following values for Red: 181, Green: 204, and Blue: 219. This generates a light blue colour, which we'll soon use for a gradient fill.

3 Import the wave

Open the 'wave.tiff' file from our cover CD-ROM. You'll then have to copy and paste the image into a new layer in our newly created Photoshop Elements image. The 'wave' image is too large, so click on the 'Move' tool in the main menu.

4 Resize the image

Hold down 'Shift' and grab one of the handles. This will scale the image in all directions. Scale it to look like the screenshot above, then, in the Layer palette, change the blending mode from Normal to Overlay with an opacity of 50%.

5 Create a new layer

Create a new layer by going to the 'Layer' menu and select 'New', 'New Layer'. Then select the 'Gradient' tool from the Tool palette. On the context sensitive bar at the top of the screen, select 'Edit' then 'foreground to transparent'.

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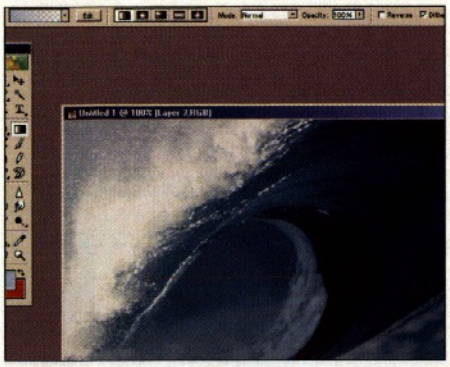


6 Create a gradient

About a third in from the left-hand edge, click and drag towards the centre as in our screenshot above. When you release you will have created a gradient blend, which will go from light blue to transparent.

7 Create a button

Change the foreground to Red: 3, Green: 67 and Blue: 116. Then click the 'Custom shape' tool on the Tool palette, hold it down and select the rounded rectangle tool. Type 100 pixels as the corner radius on the tool option bar and draw a button.

8 Copy layer

Duplicate the layer by clicking on the Layers menu (the arrow icon), then choosing 'Duplicate layer' from the drop-down menu. Repeat this step a further three times, so that you have five identical rectangles in your work area.

9 Group layers

Once you've positioned your layers, go to the 'Layers' palette. There's an empty box next to the eye symbol – click this on all the layers that are buttons to display a link icon linking them together. Go to the 'Layer' menu and select 'Merge linked'.

10 Create another layer

Change the foreground colour to Red: 107, Green: 152 and Blue: 183. Select the rounded rectangle tool, change the corner radius to 10 then draw a layer as above. Click the thumbnail image in the Layer order and drag below the existing buttons.

11 Blank space

Select the 'Rectangular marquee tool' in the main toolbar, and draw a rectangle around the buttons, making sure you're still working in the border layer. Press 'Delete' on the keyboard to remove the space within this selection.

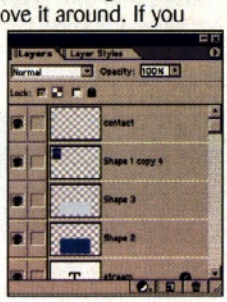
Top Tips!

Easy effects

Whenever you want to apply an effect to text it's possible to see the final outcome without having to try out the effect first, as the effects all come with a thumbnail preview of what they do. Text effects are usually achieved by using several filters, to achieve the end result, so this can be a real time saving shortcut.

Dragging layers

At some point you will almost certainly want to change your layer order. Do this by dragging the thumbnail image in the Layers palette to move it around. If you want to copy a layer, drag it onto the new layer icon which will duplicate the layer and position it directly above the previous layer.



Jargon buster

Filter

A filter is a special effect that can be applied to your image. It's important not to get carried away with filters as things could end up looking a mess. Instead, use subtle filters that create artistic looking images.

Layers

When different photographs are brought in to the same document, they are automatically placed on a new layer and this is where the power of Photoshop Elements lies. You can apply different blends, effects and warps to each layer precisely giving you complex image editing tools.

Merging Layers

Merging layers that are linked is a way of keeping file size and project manageability to an optimum. When several layers such as text or layer shapes have been created, they can take up lots of space in the layers palette and pretty soon you can end up with more layers than you know what to do with.

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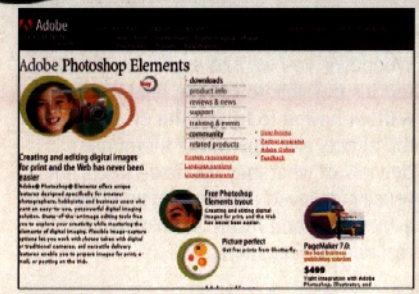
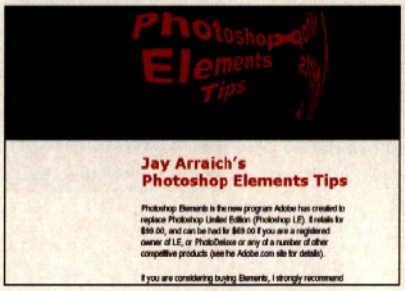
Web resources



Adobe

www.adobe.com/products/photoshopel/main.html

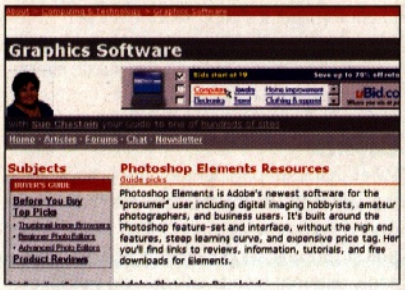
Adobe's very own collection of hints and tips which will show you how to create your own fantastic images with these time saving tutorials.



Photoshop Elements Tips

www.arraich.com/elements/psEintro.htm

This site has an excellent 'How do I...?' section which features frequently asked questions about common problems, plus lots of other reference material and online tutorials to help when you get stuck.



About

http://graphicssoft.about.com/cs/photoshopelements

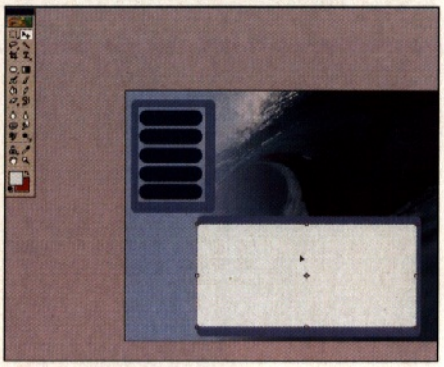
You will find all kinds of resources here and also a very useful section which details which downloads for Athe full version of Photoshop will also work in Photoshop Elements. Stuff covered here includes brushes, filters and custom shapes.

12 Another shape layer

We are going to create another layer that will be used as our text area when we create the final Web page – so create another rounded rectangle with the Shape tool. Position it and size it as shown in our screenshot above.

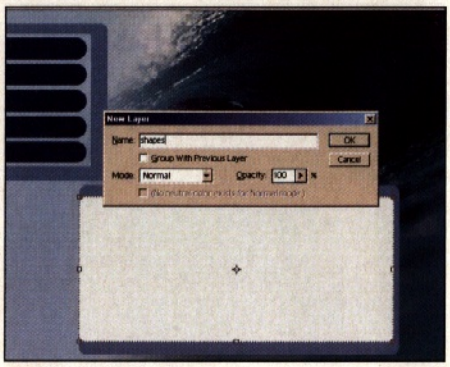
13 A white space

Now we need to draw a white rounded box near to the edge of the current blue shape. Select the rounded rectangle tool from the main toolbar, and choose white from the colour palette. Draw the rectangle as shown above.



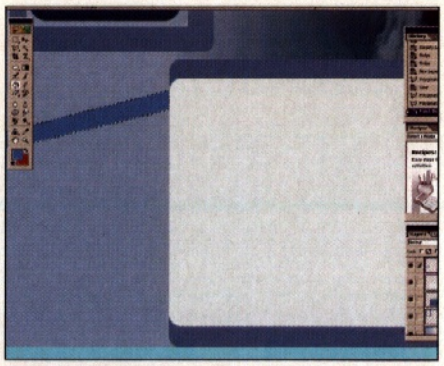
14 Adjust to fit

Move the white shape by selecting the 'Move' tool from the toolbar. Make sure the left edge of the white box coincides with the left edge of the blue box it sits on top of, so that the boxes end on the same level.



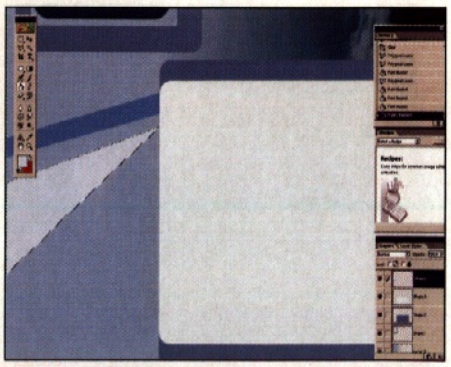
15 A new layer

Create a new layer and call it 'Shapes'. We are going to create some shapes within this layer using the polygon lasso to draw straight angled shapes, then fill them with various foreground colours to add interest to our site.



16 Polygon lasso

Select the Polygon lasso from the tool bar and zoom into 300% ('Ctrl' and '+' to zoom), then draw a shape at the edge of the text fill area as shown in the screenshot above. Select the Fill tool (looks like a paint bucket) and fill with light blue.



17 Another lasso

Using the polygon lasso, create a polygon shape as in the screenshot above. Once again, use the paint bucket to fill the area. This time the same dark blue colour used as the background in step 2.

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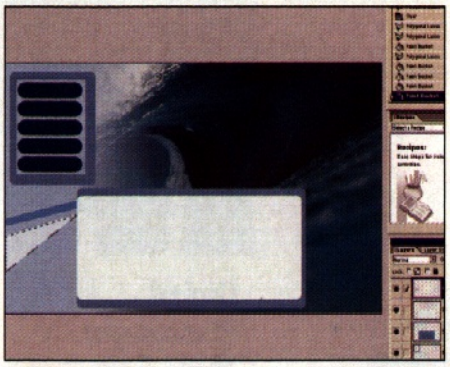
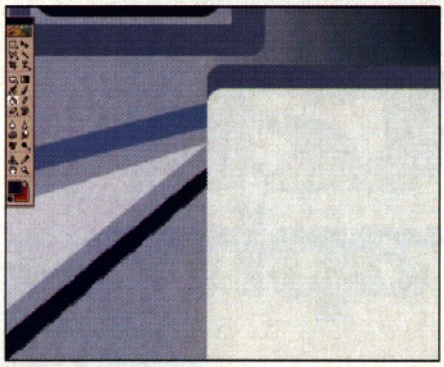


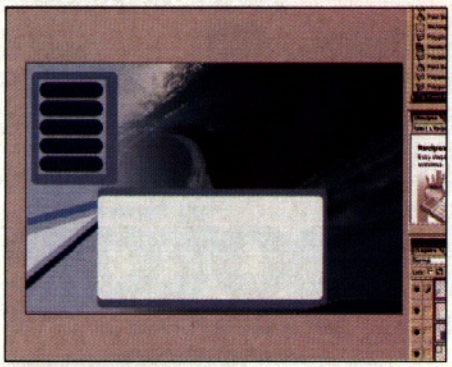
18 Zoom Out

It's difficult at 300% to see what you've created because of the anti-aliasing on the pixels. Use 'Ctrl' and '-' to zoom out to 100% and see how things are progressing. If all has gone to plan, you should see something similar to the above.



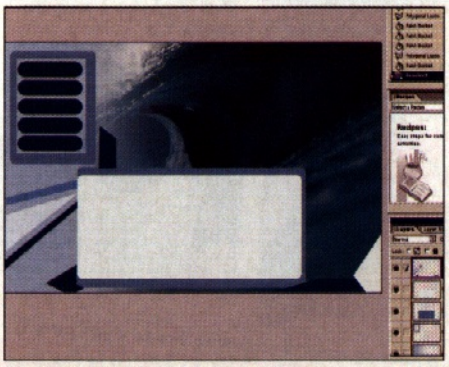
19 A darker edge

Zoom back in and use the eye dropper tool and select the buttons that we created in step 7. This samples the colour so that we can copy the above shape again with the Polygon lasso tool and fill it using the paint bucket fill tool.



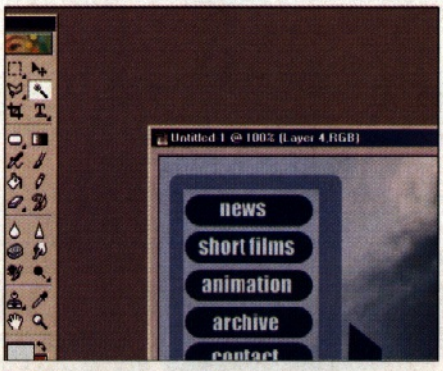
20 More shapes

Create another shape using the polygon lasso tool, this time you can be at 100%. Make sure you put this right into the bottom right-hand corner of the image. Now fill it using the medium blue colour as previously used.



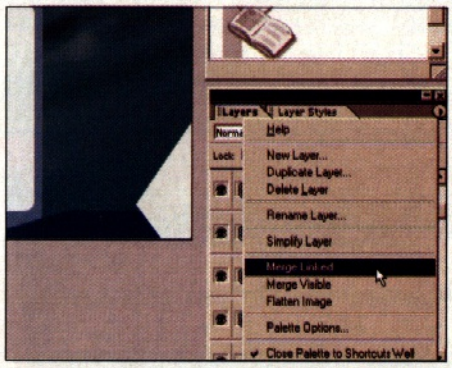
21 Final polygons

You should be getting the hang of the polygon tool now. Use the tool to complete the following shapes as shown in the screen shot to complete all the detail that's required on the shapes layer.



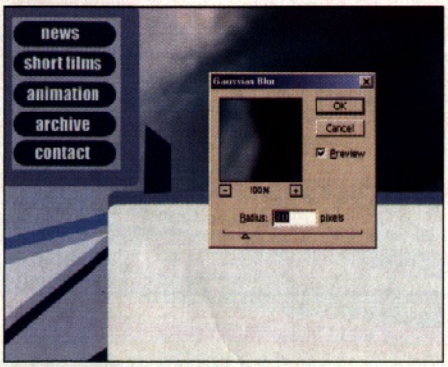
22 Text headings

We are going to add text to the buttons created earlier, so select the 'Text' tool. We have used 22pt, Impact type. Click on the button and begin typing. Repeat this with the appropriate headings for the other buttons on the page.



23 Group and Merge

Once you have aligned the text and positioned the headings, group the text layers by clicking the Link icon next to each thumbnail in the Layers palette. Go to the 'Layers' menu and select 'Merge Linked' to flatten them onto one layer.



24 Blur the Wave

In order to keep our file size to a minimum, we will need to blur any detail in the wave background to get a higher compression. Select the wave layer and go to 'Filer', 'Blur' and select 'Gaussian Blur' with a value of 3 pixels.

25 Show me the logo

Open the media1.tga file from the CD and use the magic wand tool to click the grey area around the edge of the logo. Hold down 'Shift' and click in the centre grey area to select that as well. Then go to 'Select' and choose 'Inverse'.

26 Add the logo

After selecting the logo, change to the pointer tool and drag the logo from the original file onto the Web page. It imports quite large, so we are going to reduce it. But first we need to change the layer order so we can see the logo properly. →

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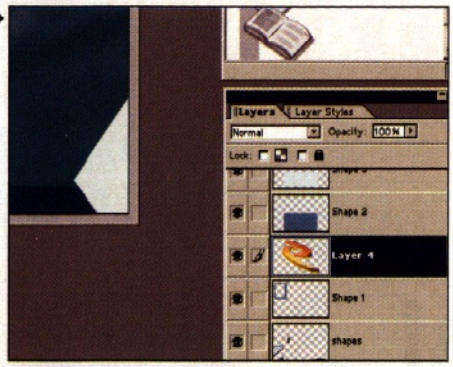


27 Drag layers

Drag the Shapes layer down the palette until it's just above the Gradient layer, then let go to place it there. Now position the logo layer just above the shapes layer. You are ready to resize the logo so it can all be seen on the page.

28 Size is everything

Resize it to look like above. With the layer still selected, use the rectangle marquee tool to select the area under the white area. Once selected, copy and paste it onto a new layer, set its opacity to 30% and re-order the layers.

29 Text logo

Select an orange from the logo with the eye dropper tool and type 'media' at 90pt type. Now select a yellow from the logo and type 'stream' at 90pt type. These will be on separate text layers so just align the text with each other.

30 Text in Full Effect

Select the 'stream' text and then select the 'Layer Styles' tab from the Layers palette. If you select Bevel from the options, select the style labelled 'Pillow Emboss'. This defines your text from the background. Do the same with the 'media' text.

31 Saving

To save, look under the 'File' menu and select 'Save for web'. You can preview how your image will look with various rates of compression and in different formats. There's also an option to view the image first in a browser!

32 And finally...

Drop into your html page, here we've sliced the images accordingly and added a little bit of text content. Now that it is set on a white background, the white cuts into the main image really stand out and aren't as jarring.

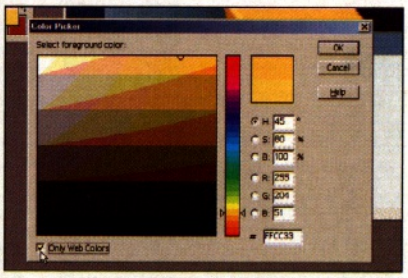
Top tips!

Tool Options Bar

The tool options bar changes according to what tool you have selected. It brings up specific tool sensitive controls that are designed to help you use the tool more accurately. Don't be afraid to play with the settings – you will probably be surprised at the power that's available to you.

Navigator

When you zoom in it can be difficult to make out image and the overall image is lost. However, if you click on the Navigator palette, you can quickly pan around the document, as well as zoom in and out from here. Similarly, you can pan around the document by holding down the space bar so that the pointer turns into a hand.



Web-safe Colour Picker

To change colour, you can double click on either the foreground or background colour to bring up the colour picker pop-up window. If you want to export in GIF format you can select the Web-safe colour option. This way, all colour selected will be within the standard GIF colour palette, viewable in virtually every Web browser. You can also type in the hexadecimal code if you know precisely what colour you want to use.

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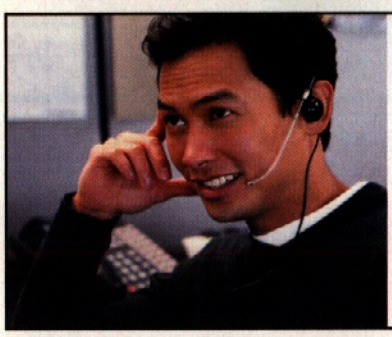

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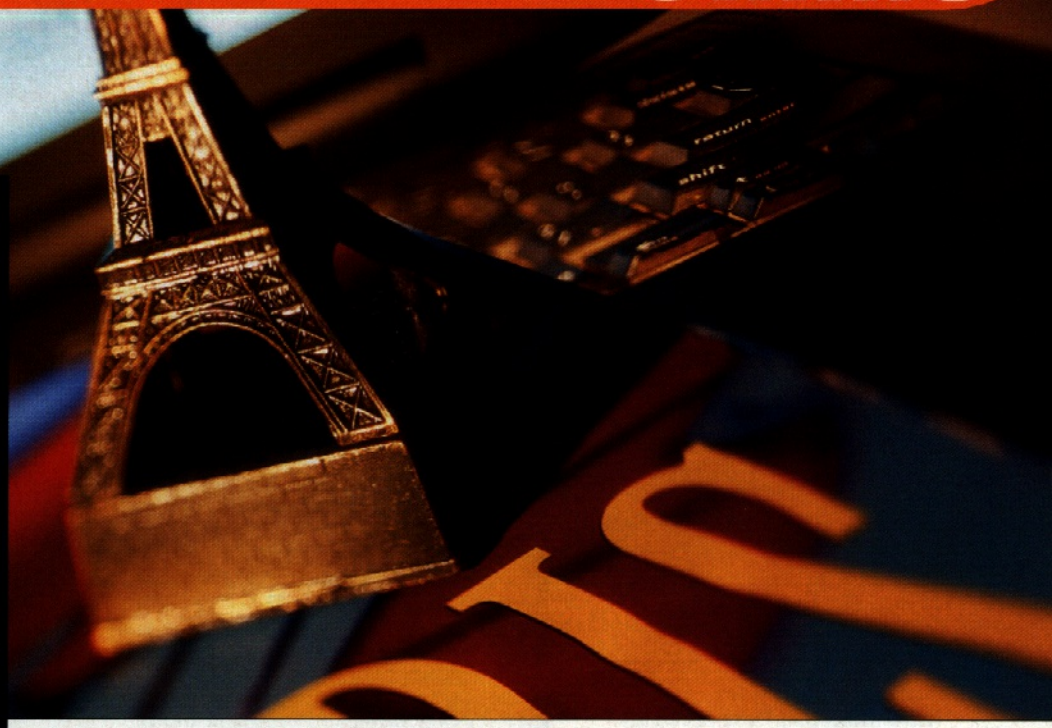

Welcome...

DURING MY FIRST spell on *Practical Internet* two years ago, I was thrilled to witness the stock market flotation of firms like Lastminute.com and happy to bask in the raised profile the dot com boom gave the Net.

Unfortunately the much-publicised downturn in the technology sector brought us all back down to Earth with a bump; which makes it even more satisfying for me to be editing my first issue of the magazine just as Lastminute.com announces its UK operations should make a profit later this year. Despite this, setting up a business on the Net is as difficult as ever. That's why we put Your Business Online together.

The aim of YBO is to show you how to maximize the opportunities the Internet offers. We'll show Webmasters how to make their Web sites more profitable, keep you abreast of all the eCommerce news and show you how to drive traffic to your site.

Before I go, let me just say a word of thanks to my predecessor, Mark Newman. Mark left the magazine for an exciting new career in Taunton, but I'm sure you'll all miss his invaluable contributions.

Paul Newman
Editor

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The latest eCommerce news and products

YBO Q&A p105
Let Gerard Liston cure your eBiz hiccups

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Advice on keeping your customers happy

Tips for eCommerce success p108
Ten hot tips to make your business boom

Equology software p110-113
Build an eCommerce site from scratch

Web hosting listings p114-115
Find a home for your business

Lastminute.com in profitable business shock!

BUT NOT UNTIL LATER IN THE YEAR AT THE EARLIEST, SAYS DOT COM CAUSE CELEBRE

LASTMINUTE.COM, THE Internet firm responsible for sending Internet magazines and the mainstream press alike into a hyperbole frenzy when it floated on the stock exchange in 2000, has announced that its UK operations are finally on course to turn a profit in the latter part of this year.

The news, which should cheer a depressed dot com industry, saw the company announce comforting figures that will give its long-suffering shareholders something to shout about after three years of losses.

According to the firm's latest set of figures, losses in the first three months of its financial year were down to £7.2million. While this can hardly be branded as a raging success, the fact that Lastminute.com haemorrhaged £11million during the corresponding period in the previous year puts the latest set of figures in perspective.

Lastminute.com (**www.lastminute.com**), an auction-based Web site, was the Internet's most high profile firm during the UK's dot com boom of 1999-2000. However, as the hype began to fade and people in the financial sector started to ask questions about the huge losses the firm was making, share prices began to tumble from the launch price of well over 500p to an embarrassing low of 20p.

According to the company's group managing director, Martha Lane-Fox, each of the countries in the Lastminute group is now heading for break-even and the future looks rosier still. "Sometime in 2003 we should be making a clear profit for the business," she said.

The UK's best known eCommerce brand looks set to achieve profitability at some point later this year

News in brief

→Actinic has announced the launch of Actinic Link for QuickBooks 2001. The latest product from the eCommerce software developer promises to take the pressure off businesses everywhere by integrating their eCommerce and accounts software into one single system. Actinic Link for Quickbooks costs £175.00 or is available free of charge to those upgrading to the latest version of the firm's Catalog to Business software. See **www.actinic.co.uk** for more details.

→Did you miss out on the opportunity to register one of the new .biz domains? Then you could be in luck, because domain registry Neulevel (www.neulevel.biz) is re-releasing 39,000 .biz names that were originally tied up in various court actions. There's only two catches: you have to apply for the name you want and applications have to be in by 11 March this year. So if you want to join the 600,000 or so existing .biz owners you'll need to hurry.

→Gullible investors in the United States are falling victim to a series of hoax Web sites that court investment in return for a share of the profits. Unusually, the fraudulent Web sites were actually set up by America's equivalent of the UK's Financial Service's Authority for the sole purpose of educating investors against giving money to online scamsters. One fake Web site, for a fictitious firm called McWhortle Enterprises, managed to draw 150,000 hits in just three days.

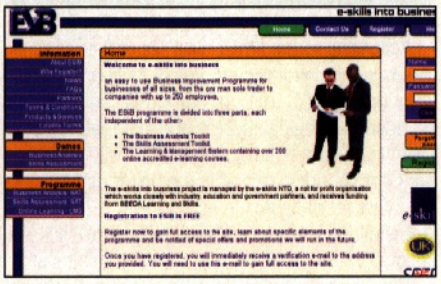
→Businesses looking to move the hosting of their site from a shared server may find a new product from the Positive Internet Company (www.positive-internet.com) ideal for their requirements. The Dolphin, which is an entry-level dedicated server, is available for just £159.99 per month, permits firms a monthly bandwidth limit of 40Gb and features a guaranteed three-hour response time to support requests. Phone 0800 2316 1006 for more details.

Skills, thrills and moneymaking

NATIONAL TRAINING ORGANIZATION LAUNCHES NEW TRAINING SCHEME FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

SMALL TO MEDIUM size businesses in the south east of England can soon hope to make a greater impact on the Internet. This is all thanks to a new scheme from the e-Skills National Training Organisation, which aims to provide them with the expertise they need.

Called e-skills Into Business, or ESiB for short, the new scheme is effectively an online teaching programme designed to increase the competitiveness and performance of firms with up to 250 employees by introducing them to the benefits of the Internet and eCommerce.



Is your firm missing out on the eCommerce revolution? Head for ESiB and find out what you should be doing to put things right

The ESiB programme is broken down into three distinct sections: the Business Analysis Toolkit, which is a diagnostic tool that can help firms work out where they currently stand in relation to information technology and where they should be; the Skills Assessment Toolkit, which helps firms identify their existing skills and isolate the skills they need; and a series of online learning courses, providing tuition in areas such as IT, eBusiness and management.

Companies signing up for the Business Analysis Toolkit will have to shell out £82.25, while those opting for the Skills Assessment Toolkit will have to stump up £47. The online learning courses are all priced at £23.50.

At present the scheme is available to all businesses in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Sussex, Hampshire, Kent, Oxfordshire and Surrey. Businesses outside these areas can also register for the scheme and will eventually be eligible for the full programme.

Those interested in learning more about the new initiative can find more information at the ESiB Web site (**www.esib.co.uk**) where demos of all three services are available.

Brit firms waste a billion on email

TOO MANY EMPLOYEES BOGGED DOWN IN EMAIL SORTING BUREAUCRACY

IT ISN'T LIKE we need a survey to remind us about just how much bureaucracy the average British employee has to endure, but according to the folks over at NOP, British business lost £1.3 billion last year as employees wasted their time sifting through administrative emails rather than doing what they were employed to do in the first place.

The survey of nearly 500 adults, which was conducted on behalf of Trium, found that over 60 per cent of people felt that their bulging Inboxes stopped them from completing set tasks. Another 58 per cent said they arrived at work early and left late purely so that they could get on top of non-urgent administrative emails

When you consider that the survey was conducted on behalf of the mobile Internet arm of Matsushita Electric Telecom Europe, it comes as no surprise to learn that Trium's proposed solution is to let workers sort through their emails on their mobile phones – away from the office.

If these people think they have problems with the amount of email they get, they should try working on an Internet magazine!

Number crunching

Highlights from NOP's survey

- **62 per cent** were prevented from accomplishing set tasks by sorting email
- **58 per cent** said they came in early and stayed late to sort their mail
- **52 per cent** found that sorting email affected their productivity
- **43 per cent** would rather sort email away from the office if allowed

Amazon pulls Christmas cracker

DOT COM GIANT FLOURISHES DURING BRITAIN'S PRE-CHRISTMAS ECOMMERCE BOOM

One of the Net's oldest retailers, amazon.co.uk, merrily trounced its traditional bricks and mortar rivals in the Christmas 2001 battle for eCommerce supremacy.

According to the latest figures from Nielsen/Net Ratings, the online bookseller-turned-home-entertainment-vendor gained over a million new visitors in the months leading up to Christmas.

The Amazon brand managed to clock up a further victory when the .com version of its Web site recorded the second highest amount of unique visitors.

Despite two Amazon domains ruling the ratings roost, it was a prosperous Christmas for a wide range of different Net retailers. Argos.co.uk, for instance, registered a huge 82 per cent increase in traffic, while travel site expedia.co.uk gained a 78 per cent boost.

According to Internet analyst Tom Ewing from Nielsen/Net Ratings, the figures represented a highly positive for online shopping. "We expect to see strong growth at Christmas, but these figures are exceptionally good" he said.

Despite Amazon's soaraway success, the fastest growing site during December was the greetings card seller egreetings.com, which grew by 153 per cent.

Amazon may be the top dog of Christmas 2001, but when will the company ever make a profit? Answers on a postcard please...

THE TOP 10

eCommerce domains in the fourth quarter

Visitors in October-December 2001

1.	Amazon.co.uk	4,255,231
2.	Amazon.com	2,826,719
3.	eBay.co.uk	2,106,823
4.	tesco.com	2,030,229
5.	argos.co.uk	1,823,337
6.	lastminute.com	1,776,393
7.	expedia.co.uk	1,560,981
8.	come.co.uk	1,320,190
9.	eBay.com	925,863
10.	bol.com	872,244

Over two million people decided to avoid Jane Horrocks and her annoying mum by shopping online

Data courtesy of Nielsen/NetRatings

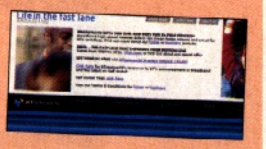
BT plans bargain broadband

MONSTER TELCO REACTS TO MARKET FORCES

BT HOPES ITS reduced ADSL charges will stimulate broadband. In truth, the telco can't afford not to slash costs – it faces stiff competition from other providers

Broadband Internet access prices look set to tumble with the announcement that BT plans to cut the cost of its ADSL service.

Responding to developments in the ISP market that have seen other firms undercut BT's broadband prices and fierce competition from cheap and simple self-install broadband products (see page 11), the company's Chief Executive, Ben Verwaayen, promised "substantial" price cuts were in the pipeline.



Small businesses currently seeking high speed Internet access have to sign up with BTopenworld. Although this provides bandwidth of up to 2000k to be shared between employees the service is pricey, costing £159.99 a month to run and £260 to install.

The UK's broadband market has lagged behind other European nations. BT's willingness to reduce charges should stimulate the market and bring affordable ADSL solutions to small businesses.

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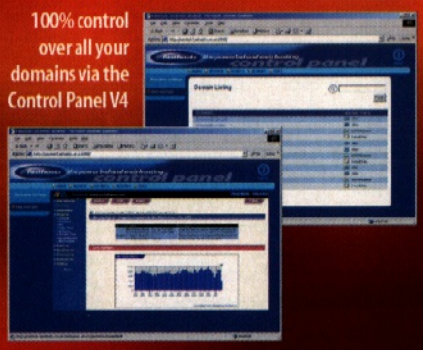

DOMAIN LISTING

LIVE STATS

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- **200 MB Web space**
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- **Unlimited POP3** e-mail accounts
- **Unlimited e-mail** forwarding
- Hosted on Windows 2000 servers
- Full support for ASP3 and Perl
- Full support for Microsoft Frontpage 2000 Extensions
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- Advanced Virtual Control Panel V4
- 24 x 7 Telephone and E-mail support
- ODBC database connectivity
- Live statistics for your website
- Full CGI support
- SQL Server 7.0 Database connectivity
- Advanced Password Protection for your website

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Personal Account

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Your Business Online Q&A

GERARD LISTON OF SMALLBIZ UK (WWW.SMALLBIZ.UK.COM) ANSWERS YOUR EBUSINESS QUESTIONS. EMAIL HIM AT PI@PARAGON.CO.UK

Q My Web site currently makes me a little money. What help is available to turn this profitable sideline into a viable business?

Mike Howard

A **It can be confusing knowing how to get started when everyone appears ready to offer help and advice about setting up an 'eBusiness' – from high street banks and Business Links to government departments and Internet service providers. However, the 'dot-com' bubble has certainly burst and eBusinesses (like most other start-ups) need to observe the usual common-sense rules. A good business idea must be supported by hard work and careful planning.**

Sites such as Beyondbricks.com (www.beyondbricks.com) could help you by providing inspiration and encouragement from other e-entrepreneurs and consultants. If you need funding to launch the business, the likes of Venturedome.com (www.venturedome.com) offers guidance about finding venture capital or private equity funding and j4b.co.uk (www.j4b.co.uk) should be able to point you in the direction of business grants. But in the end, you will have to make the decision about what product you're selling; who your customers are; how you will sell to them; and how you are going to make money.

Palo Alto (www.paloalto.com) provides no-nonsense business planning tools for small firms and you'll find other services and information on Smallbiz.uk.com. However, in the end, I suspect that a cashflow spreadsheet will be the most effective way of helping you decide whether your lucrative sideline could become a profitable business.

Q Running my own business leaves little time for book-keeping. Are there any time-saving ideas from the Web for small firms?

Sally Beard

A **Although the shoebox full of receipts is an unfair stereotype of the average small firm, you are probably typical of most people running their own business. Book-keeping, VAT returns and other financial matters (apart from invoicing, of course) are often perceived as a necessary evil.**

Market-leading products, such as Sage and Quickbooks, offer affordable and sophisticated software solutions and some of these have been adapted for life on the Web. But in my experience, a lot of small firms find that they demand too much time – both to learn and to use. More recent products such as MyBusiness seem better tuned into the lifestyle of small firms. As well as book-keeping, this also covers other business routines, such as managing tasks, diaries and business contacts.

There have been attempts to launch online book-keeping services, but I'm not aware of one that hits the target properly yet. However, there certainly are online services that can provide small firms with helpful information and advice. The Desktop Accountant (www.tdaol.com) is well worth a look.

Q I'd really like to send out an email newsletter to our customers. How do I avoid this being perceived as junk mail and ensure that I get some response?

J Tango

A **It may be described as new media promotion, but email newsletters are still a form of direct marketing. And, like all forms of direct marketing, they rely on a relevant message being targeted at an appropriate audience.**

So, it is certainly worth thinking before you start drafting copy. If your objective is to cultivate a sense of community or loyalty among your existing customers, you will probably create something quite different from a newsletter that primarily aims to stimulate additional business.

Just as a mailshot letter and a telemarketing script require different copy, email marketing has its own peculiarities. Most people expect email communication to be concise and you have the opportunity to use hyperlinks to draw people through to your Web site. On the other hand, many business people are sick and tired of unsolicited and irrelevant emails. So, apart from ensuring that you observe Data Protection rules, it pays to be courteous. Give people an opportunity to opt out.

With HTML newsletters, you can send out a newsletter that is nearer to an online publication than an email message. However, focus on the basics first (targeting and message) before considering graphical presentation.

Gerard's sites

A SELECTION OF ONLINE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU PLAN AND MAINTAIN YOUR BUSINESS

Beyond bricks

www.beyondbricks.com

Gain encouragement and inspiration from the news, features and guidance published at this Net entrepreneur's portal. Registered members can gain access to an archive of useful business reference material.

Venturedome.com

www.venturedome.com

Planning to start a business or convert a profitable concern into serious revenue? Take a look at this site for details and advice about raising venture capital and private equity funding.

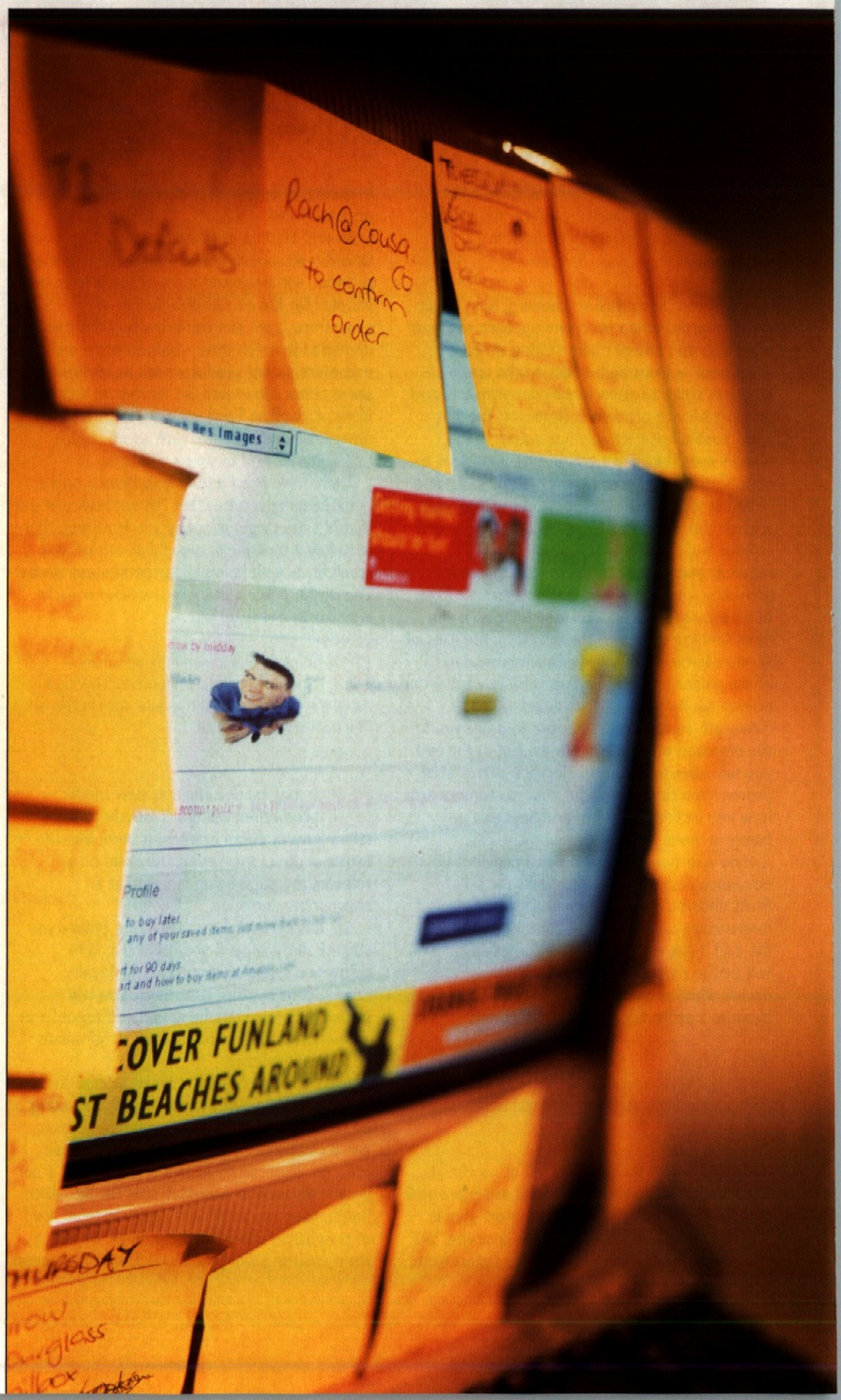
The Desktop Accountant

www.tdaol.com

Nobody likes dealing with paperwork, but a book-keeping backlog can put serious strain on small businesses. Use this site to help organise those tedious, but vital chores – everything from payrolls to taxation is covered.

Handle with care

CLIENT-HANDLING SKILLS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR ANYONE WANTING TO MAKE WEB SITES FOR BUSINESSES. **JO CHIPCHASE** OFFERS SOME VALUABLE ADVICE ON HOW TO KEEP CALM AND BUILD LONG-LASTING AND HOPEFULLY LUCRATIVE RELATIONSHIPS



If you're operating as a Web designer, your clients are your raison d'être, the food on your table, the factor that's keeping you from an enticing career in McDonalds. It would seem pertinent that you should treat your clients respectfully, provide them with a good service, and receive respect in return.

However, as most small businesses will testify, clients can be a right royal pain in the derriere, and that's with a capital 'P'. Whether it's their questionable taste in page layouts, their stubborn failure to pay on time, or asking you to revise your work ten times before reverting to your original design, these creatures can have you tearing out your hair.

To keep yourself sane and increase the chance of retaining existing clients and winning repeat business, it's vital to hone your client handling skills. It's as important as updating design skills.

Starting off on the right foot

From the outset of a project, both client and designer must know where they stand. Unless you actively enjoy engaging in disputes, it's advisable to have a signed document specifying the scope of the job, the timescale, and what you'll be providing for a given price. Ensure that the client's obligations are also stated in the contract – at a minimum, they should agree to provide materials and decisions within a reasonable timescale. Make a provision for tasks that don't fall under the remit of the arrangement (for example, state that they'll be charged as extras at an hourly or daily rate). If

in doubt, take legal advice. At this stage, it's vital to manage your client's expectations and be realistic about what you can achieve.

Never make false promises or claims. If you promise your client a finished site next week with 10,000 visitors, they'll be disgruntled when it's ready next quarter and is totally unpopulated. Be aware that late delivery could cause a real problem, especially if your client has scheduled PR and advertising activities to coincide with the launch. You should always seek to give 100% to a client. On the first order, try to achieve 101% – although watch out that your service levels don't subsequently fall.

Two-way communication

In the words of BT, "it's good to talk", and good communication can help a project run smoothly. If a brief you receive from a client is ambiguous, seek clarification before ploughing ahead. Wouldn't it be soul-destroying to produce an all-singing, all-dancing Flash front-end when your client wanted basic HTML? Insist that your client confirms any decisions/approvals by email, so you have them on file in case there's a later dispute. Keep your client informed of progress, but don't pester them with trivial details.

Some clients are slow at admin and your Web project might not be their top priority. Make their responsibilities clear in advance and chase them up at every stage. If material you need for a job is missing, ask for it in good time. If you encounter unforseen teething troubles, address these promptly, rather than using them as an excuse for late delivery. You won't win friends and influence people by telling your client, the day before a scheduled launch, that their site is only half complete. It's good practice to inform your client of any changes to the specification, timescale or budget of their project as early as possible.

One of the basic rules of business is: be as honest as you can. Clients will suspect if you're pulling the wool over their eyes or avoiding them (ducking phone calls isn't sustainable for very long and will make you appear unprofessional).

Awkward clients

It's said that the customer is king, but your relationship won't work if the client walks all over you. With awkward clients, insist that they specify exactly what they want, even if it means sitting at a PC together to work it out. Some clients feel they must have a personal input into a project, but have the creative juices of a stone.

So try to be patient. A client who doesn't know what he/she requires might be convinced by a personal demonstration of your ideas. If your client makes demands that aren't reasonable (such as asking you to produce something time-consuming that isn't in the plan/budget), try to assist – but at an extra cost to your original agreement. If a request is entirely ridiculous, politely and firmly explain why it couldn't and shouldn't be done.

In 99% of situations, it pays to prevent a dispute from escalating. If a client is unusually difficult, you may question whether they're worth having in the long run. In the meantime, you must smooth things over and complete the job. Be firm and professional and stick to the facts, rather than becoming angry and resorting to emotive opinions. It may be worth holding a meeting to 'clear the air'.

To ensure everyone knows where they stand, draw up a written plan of reasonable and achievable activities for a set period, and have the client sign it off. Agree the hours and budget that will be spent on the plan, and stick to them firmly. Don't be sidetracked into superfluous activities that aren't in the plan. A signed document means the client can't deny what was agreed and use a concocted "undone job" as an excuse for delayed or non-payment.

Money matters

It's important to get your fee structure right, and pay heed to a potential client's financial standing. Prepare to be flexible and offer small businesses or not-for-profit organizations a discount on the fees you'd charge a major company. However, don't be put in a position where you're doing work for nothing – unless it's in exchange for something that has clear value to you, such as "I'll swap you a day's copywriting for a day's Web design". It will do you no harm to offer an established client the occasional small freebie or extra, but don't go overboard with your generosity.

"THE RELATIONSHIP WON'T WORK IF A CLIENT WALKS ALL OVER YOU"

If your client fails to pay up, be sure to chase their accounts personnel. Call frequently to ask when payment will be received. Be pleasant but persistent (remember that rudeness may send your invoice to the bottom of the pile). Keep a record of what was said for later reference. If your client hasn't paid their last bill, ask for settlement before commencing new work. If they're adamant about not paying, investigate the reasons why – perhaps there's an issue with your work that should be resolved?

Reputation counts

Remember that reputation counts, and you may win or lose contracts on world of mouth recommendation. A client scorned is a client who might shout their misgivings from the rooftops. Conversely, if you service clients well and maintain good working relationships, you're likely to receive new business.

Five dos and don'ts for handling clients

Do

- ✔ Be confident. Give your client the impression you're calm and in control.
- ✔ Keep business relationships on a proper and professional footing.
- ✔ Maintain consistently high standards of work.
- ✔ Meet deadlines. If a job's going to be late, inform your client well in advance.
- ✔ Communicate frequently and clearly throughout the project.

Don't

- ✖ Try to win business by rubbishing someone else's work. The potential client may be proud of the site you're criticising.
- ✖ Make clever jokes at the expense of a client unless you know them well.
- ✖ Duck phone calls – unless the client is calling you at unacceptable times about a non-urgent situation.
- ✖ Continuously over-service the client or take on jobs free of charge.
- ✖ Become too friendly (after all, it may be difficult to ask your new "friend" for payment).
- ✖ Sleep with the client – ever.

Client hospitality

Hospitality is a useful tool for fostering good relationships with clients, but it needs a bit of thought. Treating your client to a meal as a 'thank you' for their valued business is ideal – but don't make it appear as a bribe. You don't need to visit the Ritz on every occasion but, equally, the local chippy is inappropriate.

If a client has left their normal workplace to pay you a visit, good manners dictate that you should offer to buy them lunch or dinner (or, at least, a sandwich). However, in most circumstances, you wouldn't offer to pay other expenses, such as travelling costs.

Make offers of an evening in the local strip club at your own peril (golf may be a safer bet). Finally, don't get so drink in front of the client that you divulge your trade secrets, but can't remember what you said when you sober up!

10 tips for guaranteed eCommerce success

TURN YOUR ONLINE BUSINESS INTO A MONEY SPINNER WITH OUR GUIDE TO THE ESSENTIAL THINGS YOU SHOULD BE DOING

1 Get yourself a cheap domain name

Possessing an easy-to-remember Web address is a sure-fire way of attracting visitors to your site. A well-chosen name can say a lot about your character and your business and is therefore a great marketing tool. These days you need to take out a second mortgage to get a good domain name and online resources such as **www.bigbytes.co.uk** provide a comparison of the prices and services offered by different registrars.

2 Find a cheap Web host

Don't be tempted to fall into the trap of relying on free Web space to host your site, as this often proves to be unreliable. Ideally you need a fast host that can provide secure payment facilities and other e-commerce functions. Many affordable paid-for hosting services are now available through companies like Fasthosts (**www.fasthosts.co.uk**) and Web Fusion (**www.webfusion.co.uk**). See our new Hosting Listings on page 114 for more.

3 Get a high ranking on search engines

One of the top priorities when it comes to marketing your site is to get a high ranking on search engines. You can use manual site submission software such as Traffic Seeker Pro on this month's cover disc, or sign up with a company that'll do the job for you. The top firms include ActioNet (**www.actionet.net**), Highly Ranked (**www.highlyranked.com**) and Rank4U (**www.rank4u.com**).

4 Make online payments more secure

Customers are often reluctant to reveal their precious credit card details online, so it's a good idea to offer them a secure alternative. By signing up to a 'digital money' service such as Paypal (**www.paypal.com**) or NoChex (**www.nochex.com**) punters can pay you without having to part with their credit card details. The secure payment site will then settle up with you once the transaction has gone through.

Don't worry about shipping products and tracking orders, use a service like Netdespath to do all the hard yards for you

5 Sort out your shipping

NetDespatch (**www.netdespatch.co.uk**) is a complete eCommerce service that promises to handle the shipping of your online bookings, as well as other things. The application lets people place orders, then track orders throughout your Web site. Your business can access real-time tracking information direct from the NetDespatch servers, because it is all based on XML.

6 Create cookies

Cookies are a great way of keeping a customer's name and address without making them feel insecure. This allows users to go to the checkout time and again without having to fill in all the forms. You can find out everything you've ever wanted to know about cookies at **www.cookiecentral.com**.

7 Put a forum on your site

A great way of giving your site a 'sticky' appeal is to add a forum to it. This enables visitors to write messages, and generally communicate with other visitors. More importantly, though, it gives people a reason to keep coming back to your site. One of the best forum makers can be found at **www.ezboard.com**.

8 Add customer reviews to your site

Similarly, another effective method of making your site memorable is adding a 'reviews' section. This concept, where people can write independent reviews of the products they buy from you, also helps give your site a more objective and weighty feel. Check out **www.onyoursite.net** for an easy way of achieving this.

9 Create an Ad banner for your site

While you'd be hard pushed to find someone that doesn't get annoyed by ad banners, the fact of the matter is that they work a treat for attracting visitors to your site. Luckily, there are a number of specialist applications that allow you to easily design and create your own banners, such as Bannershop GIF Animator 4.5 which is included on this month's disk. For more details, visit the developer's site at **www.setelco.com**.

10 Get your banner seen

After you've designed your banner, pop along to Banner Exchange (**www.bannerexchange.com**). This service lets you show your banner ad for free on other business sites for free, and lets you store up to three different designs, and even gives you free statistics on who's clicking.

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+registration fee: £6.70 per year. Prices exclude VAT

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In brief:

Task: Create an eCommerce Web site
Software I need: Equology Extend
Difficulty: Beginner
Time I need: 1 hour

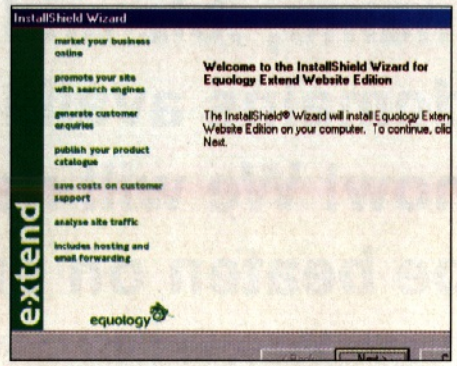
Create an eCommerce Web site

GETTING YOUR BUSINESS ONLINE CAN BE A DAUNTING TASK. TAKE THE EASY ROUTE WITH A NEW PACKAGE FROM EQUOLOGY

IF YOU RUN your own business and have never entertained having a Web site, you might like to consider this new opportunity. Or maybe you already have a site, but it's a bit of an embarrassment. Well, there's a cheap and cheerful online service from Equology that's tailor-made for beginners.

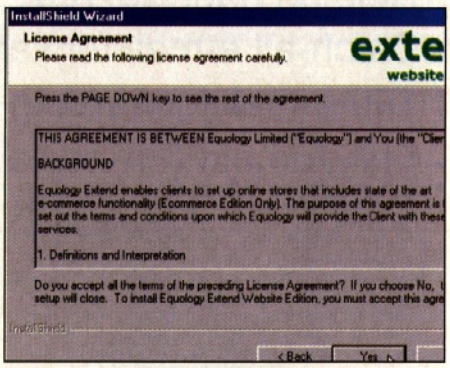
The Extend brand is a brace of packages that enable you to fashion your own site based on a simple template strategy. This removes the need for any technical ability or design flair and, price-wise, its not bad value either. The Website version will cost you just £19.95 while the more elaborate eCommerce deal retails for £39.95 plus VAT per month.

Once you've signed up for the Extend Website Edition, you'll gain access to over 140 professionally designed themes and be able to manage an unlimited product catalogue that will contain pictures and attachments. You'll also receive 30 days free hosting, along with email forwarding. And, now that we're all part of a global marketplace, you'll be able to automatically translate your site into German, French, Italian and Spanish. Visit **www.equology.com** to buy the software.



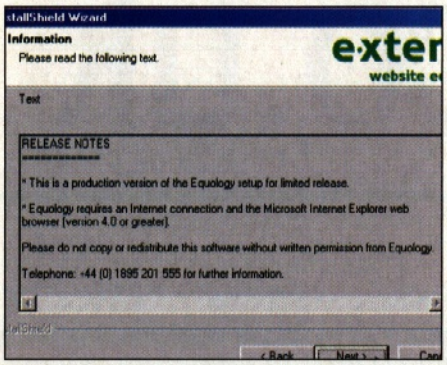
1 Getting started

To begin, simply place the Equology Extend CD in your computer's disc drive. The Installation Wizard will do all of the work for you at this stage. Click on the 'Next' button in order to proceed with the setup process.



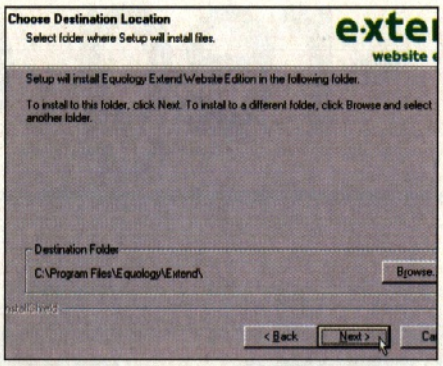
2 Read the small print

The next window displays all of the licensing details for you to agree to. Take time to read through all of the text and if you're happy with the details, click on the 'Yes' button and move on to the next step.



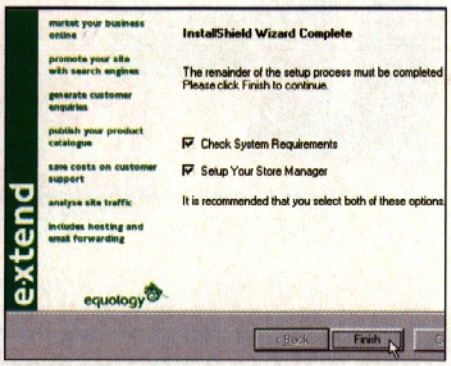
3 Release notes

You will also need to read the Release notes. This is merely to ensure that you have no plans to redistribute the software and also informs you that you will need an Internet connection and Internet Explorer to proceed.



4 Put it in the right place

The following window will pick a location for the installation files. By default this should place all of the relevant files in an Extend folder within your program files main folder, although you can specify another location if you prefer.



5 Check the system

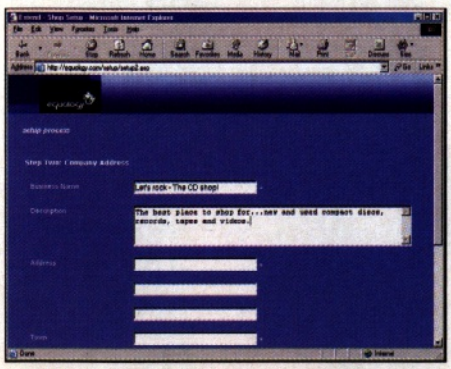
The Installation Wizard will install an icon to your desktop that will let you connect to your Web site and login to the Store Manager. The Installation Wizard will also check that Internet Explorer is installed on your computer.

6 Get building

The installation Wizard now establishes an Internet connection and will take you through creating your Web site. This takes approximately five minutes. At the end of these simple steps you will have produced your basic site.

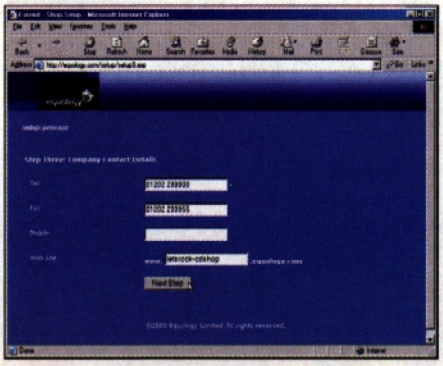
7 Your own details

The Setup process means you have to fill in your personal details. The latter is merely for security reasons when you contact customer support, should you run into any problems later on down the line.



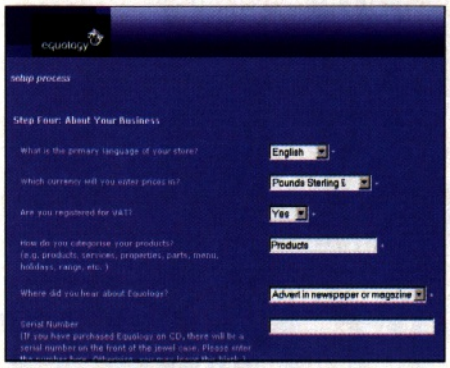
8 Your company address

You will be asked to supply your company address and add a bit about the venture. You will also have to type in your company name, which will be used to determine your final URL. This will look like this; **www.businessname.equology.com**



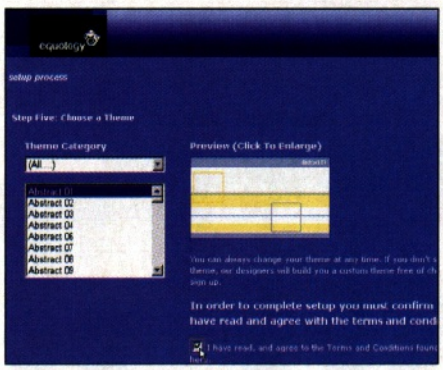
9 Contact information

The next window asks you for your business contact details. If you provide Equology with your mobile phone number you will then be sent an SMS text message when you have finished building your Web site.



10 About your business

You can specify what the primary language your product information will appear in. You can also choose a relevant currency and there is also the facility to specify whether or not you are registered for VAT.



11 Choose a theme

Our next page allows you to select your design from a collection of pre-made templates. Have a look at the various themes by clicking the theme 'Preview' button. Don't forget to check the agreement checkbox when you're done.

Top Tip!

YOU'LL GET GUARANTEED results with the Extend package just as long as you stick to using Microsoft's Internet Explorer Web browser – version 5.5 and upwards is recommended. However, you must note that Equology clearly state that the package does not work with Netscape browsers, along with other 'minority' Web browsing software. The package can be used with Apple Macintosh computers, although again you will need to use Explorer and complete the whole process online, rather than using the start-up disc that is supplied for PC's.

Jargon Buster

Store Manager

The Store Manager is a vital part of the package. This area of program provides you with all of the tools that you need to create and run your newly assembled Web site. It allows you to add, edit and delete products and categories. You can also add or edit new pages via this route along with publishing news and press releases.

Desktop Login

This is the facility within the Extend package that enables you to sign into your own Store Manager and work on the site as and when you want. You will have a unique account that prevents unauthorised visitors accessing your Web pages and making any changes without your permission. This means that you will be able to retain complete control of how your site looks and functions.

Dynamic menus

These are a highly useful feature of the Extend package. They allow you to add extra pages to your new Web site in just a few simple steps. What's more, they mean that you can create a site setup that is tailored exactly to your own needs. Every business is different, and the use of dynamic menus means that your site won't be hindered by the restraints of a fixed setup process.

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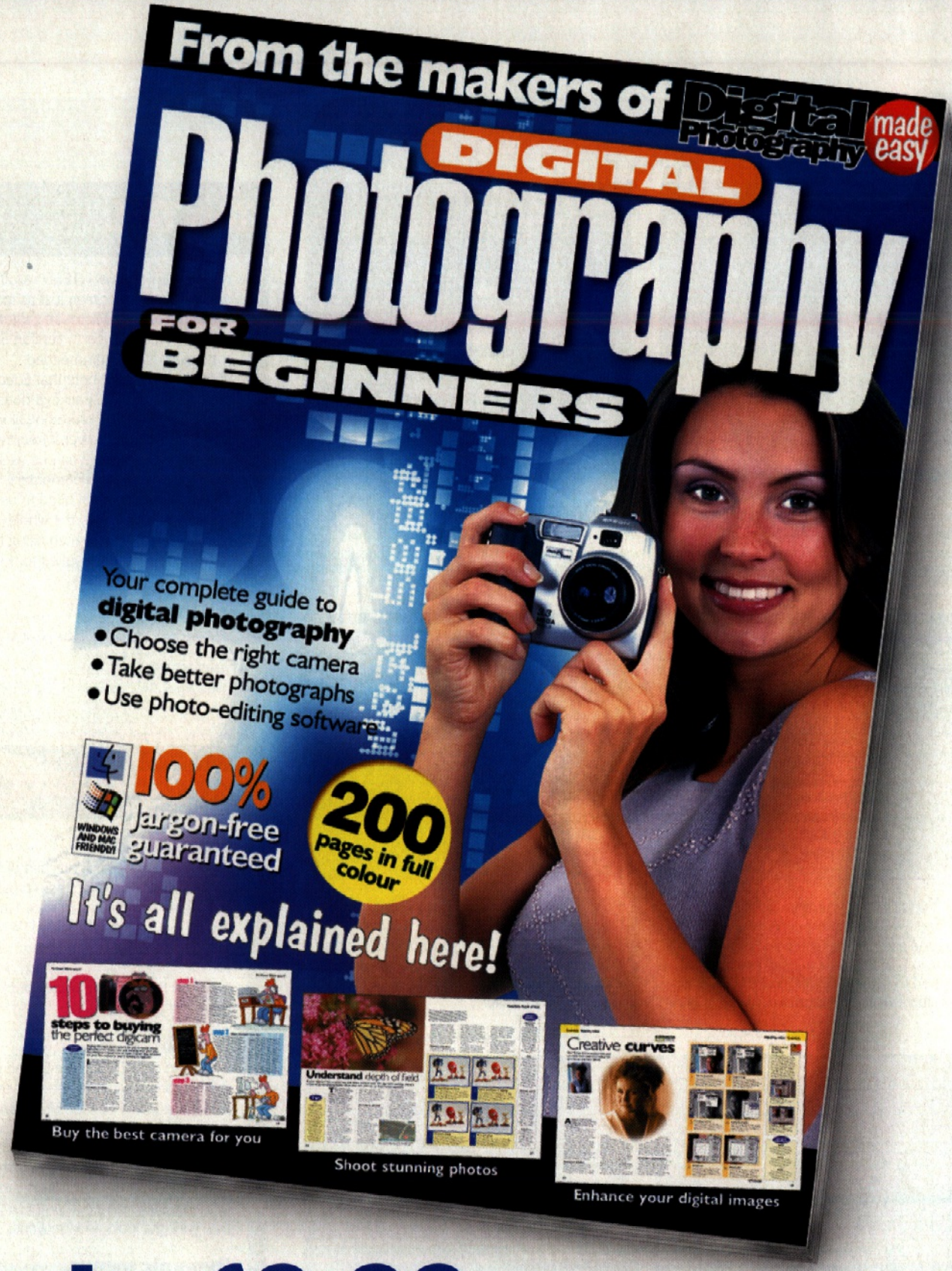

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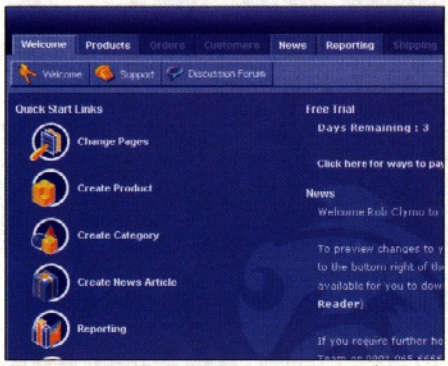
12 The Store Manager

This is the area of the Extend package that provides you with the tools to create and run your Web site from day to day. At the end of the set up process, you will be provided with the option to either view your Web site, or simply manage it.

13 Logging in

Click the 'Manage Site' icon to be taken to the Store Manager login page. There will be an icon on your desktop to enable you to log in and access your account to edit your Web pages. You can also log in via the Equology home page.

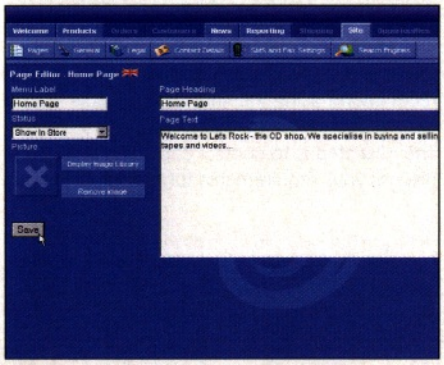


14 Store Manager interface

The Store Manager is where you maintain your Web site. The Welcome section provides you with quick-start links to common tasks. The tabs and buttons along the top and left-hand side enable all of your editing tasks to be carried out.

15 Take a look

Click the 'Preview' tab in the bottom left-hand corner of the window to take a look at your site. The Extend package offers visitors the option of using a standard HTML Web, or there is a quicker entry point if you have a high-speed connection.

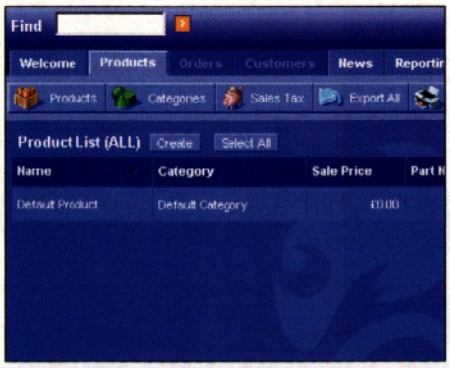


16 Create and edit

Once you've built your empty Web site, edit your main home page. This should contain obvious elements, like a welcome message, information on what your business specialises in and an overview of content.

17 Manage pages

You can do the same thing with any of the other pages within your site, via the Store Manager facility. All you have to do is tweak them to suit your own individual needs. They can also be accessed and updated at any time.

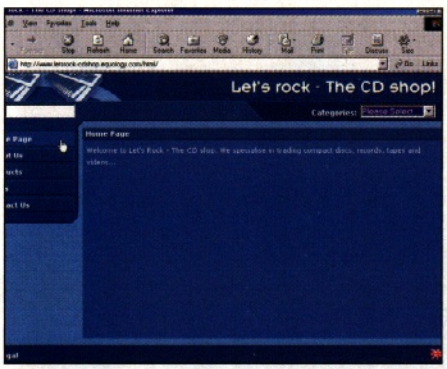


18 Adding products

Adding stock can be done in just a few minutes, depending on the amount of stock you have. Accessing and editing it can also be done swiftly. Click on the 'Products' tab in the Store Manager, then the 'Categories' button to get started.

19 Uploading pictures

You can also add images of your products, via the Control Panel. The software uploads any images you have via your Web browser. It really couldn't be easier.



20 The finished item

Here we see our completed home page. Notice how the design fits in with the theme of what we sell. Once you're done, use the online tools to submit your new completed site to the all important search engines.

Pick the perfect Web hosting deal

USE THIS AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE TO SELECT THE PERFECT HOME FOR YOUR BUSINESS OR ECOMMERCE WEB SITE

SELECTING A WEB hosting company to look after your business is just as tricky as picking the right ISP to connect you to the Internet. There's a baffling array of deals to choose from, each offering slightly different services and each charging slightly different prices. In short, there's no simple answer.

Our aim in compiling this guide is to allow you to see the different types of packages available and help you to glean some idea of the costs you're likely to face. While we haven't included every single deal offered by the firms included (we could probably fill the whole of YBO with them) we have listed the products that we think are most relevant to our readers.

To use these listings effectively we recommend using the information below to pick out a handful of firms that cater for your needs. The next step is to contact each directly to discuss your requirements further.

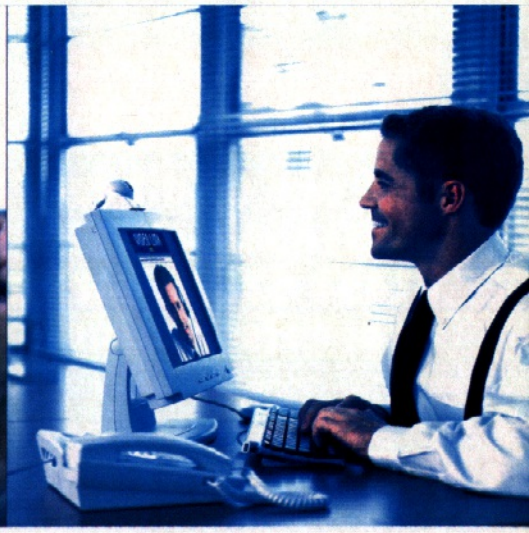
Keeping up to date

While we try and ensure that all the information in our listings is up to date, the occasional error does creep through. If you would like to update your current details drop an email to **pi@paragon.co.uk** with the information you would like changed.

NAME	URL	Package	Phone	Cost	Web space	Pop3 Accounts	Front Page Extensions	Phone Support
2020Media	www.2020media.com	Standard	0870 739 2020	£100.00	25Mb	1	Yes	Yes
2020Media	www.2020media.com	PHP	0870 739 2020	£150.00	100Mb	1	No	Yes
2020Media	www.2020media.com	Cold Fusion	0870 739 2020	£250.00	100Mb	1	No	Yes
2020Media	www.2020media.com	Java	0870 739 2020	£300.00	100Mb	1	No	Yes
9NetAvenue	www.9netave.uk.net	9Net ONE Plan	0800 328 9450	£239.40	25Mb	10	No	Yes
Active ISP	www.activeisp.co.uk	Small Business	0870 7304000	£143.40	35Mb	10	Yes	Yes
AQ Limited	www.a-q.co.uk	10Mb	08707 449227	£70.00	10Mb	1	No	No
AQ Limited	www.a-q.co.uk	20Mb	08707 449227	£122.00	20Mb	5	No	No
AQ Limited	www.a-q.co.uk	50Mb	08707 449227	£190.00	50Mb	5	No	No
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Light	0845 355 1000	£29.99	10Mb	10	No	No
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Starter	0845 355 1000	£59.99	50Mb	20	Yes	No
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Soho	0845 355 1000	£99.00	100Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Enterprise	0845 355 1000	£199.00	200Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Clara.net	www.clara.net	clarahost Professional	0845 355 1000	£399.00	500Mb	200	Yes	Yes

Web host listings

NAME	URL	Package	Phone	Cost	Web space	Pop3 Accounts	Front Page Extensions	Phone Support
Clara.net	**www.clara.net**	**clarahost Advanced**	**0845 355 1000**	**£699.00**	**500Mb**	**200**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Compila	www.compila.com	Value	020 8289 3039	£12.00	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Compila	**www.compila.com**	**Commercial**	**020 8289 3039**	**£48.00**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Compila	www.compila.com	Commercial	020 8289 3039	£48.00	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Don Host	**www.donhost.co.uk**	**Enterprise Plan**	**0870 7414151**	**£89.99**	**100Mb**	**20**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Don Host	www.donhost.co.uk	Commerce Plan	0870 7414151	£179.99	250Mb	50	Yes	Yes
Bargain Host	**wwww.bargainhost.co.uk**	**Budget Host**	**None**	**£12.99**	**35Mb**	**1**	**No**	**No**
Bargain Host	wwww.bargainhost.co.uk	Budget Host Pro	None	£22.99	50Mb	Unlimited	Yes	No
Fast Hosts	**www.fasthosts.co.uk**	**Home User**	**01452 541260**	**£60.00**	**200Mb**	**Unlimited**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Fast Hosts	www.fasthosts.co.uk	Business User	01452 541260	£199.00	200Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Ghoulnet	**www.ghoulnet.co.uk**	**Business Web**	**0800 0747581**	**£69.00**	**100Mb**	**50**	**Yes**	**No**
Iama	www.iama.co.uk	Professional	0800 1801880	£89.00	200Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Iama	**www.iama.co.uk**	**Business**	**0800 1801880**	**£179.00**	**400Mb**	**40**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Joshua Internet	www.joshuainternet.com	Starter	None	£46.41	35Mb	10	Yes	No
Joshua Internet	**www.joshuainternet.com**	**Standard**	**None**	**£92.82**	**80Mb**	**25**	**Yes**	**No**
Joshua Internet	www.joshuainternet.com	Professional	None	£185.64	200Mb	60	Yes	No
Metronet	**www.metronet.co.uk**	**Toe in the water**	**020 8426 4446**	**£49.00**	**None**	**None**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Metronet	www.metronet.co.uk	Going for a paddle	020 8426 4446	£139.00	10Mb	5	Yes	Yes
Metronet	**www.metronet.co.uk**	**Dive, dive, dive**	**020 8426 4446**	**£287.00**	**10Mb**	**5**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Namehog	www.namehog.net	Small Business	0870 9059444	£42.00	100Mb	20	Yes	No
Namehog	**www.namehog.net**	**Business Pro**	**0870 9059444**	**£60.00**	**200Mb**	**25**	**Yes**	**No**
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	EASYwebs	0800 2987214	£125.00	50Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	**www.inetc.net**	**Gold**	**0800 2987214**	**£250.00**	**30Mb**	**Unlimited**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Netcetera	www.inetc.net	Diamond	0800 2987214	£450.00	50Mb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Netcetera	**www.inetc.net**	**Platinum**	**0800 2987214**	**£600.00**	**200Mb**	**Unlimited**	**Yes**	**Yes**
PMHIS.Net	www.pmhis.net	Web+	None	£60.00	Unlimited	Unlimited	Yes	No
Powas Park	**www.powaspark.net**	**Valuespace**	**0870 7303170**	**£49.99**	**100Mb**	**50**	**No**	**Yes**
Powas Park	www.powaspark.net	Optisapce	0870 7303170	£99.99	IGb	Unlimited	Yes	Yes
Powas Park	**www.powaspark.net**	**Commercespace**	**0870 7303170**	**£199.99**	**Unlimited**	**Unlimited**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Simply Names	www.simplynames.co.uk	Simply Basic	01684 893020	£49.99	10Mb	0	No	No
Simply Names	**www.simplynames.co.uk**	**Simply Soho**	**01684 893020**	**£69.99**	**50Mb**	**1**	**Yes**	**No**
Simply Names	www.simplynames.co.uk	Simply Enterprise	01684 893020	£99.99	100Mb	10	Yes	No
Simply Names	**www.simplynames.co.uk**	**Simply Corporate**	**01684 893020**	**£149.99**	**200Mb**	**20**	**Yes**	**No**
Simply Names	www.simplynames.co.uk	Simply Ecom	01684 893020	£249.99	500Mb	50	Yes	No
Square Internet	**www.squareinternet.co.uk**	**Home Value Package**	**None**	**£13.99**	**35Mb**	**1**	**No**	**No**
Square Internet	www.squareinternet.co.uk	Home Value Plus	None	£22.50	50Mb	Unlimited	Yes	No
Square Internet	**www.squareinternet.co.uk**	**Business Host Package**	**None**	**£49.99**	**100Mb**	**Unlimited**	**Yes**	**No**
Square Internet	www.squareinternet.co.uk	Business Host Plus Package	None	£99.99	250Mb	Unlimited	Yes	No
Strongnet	**www.strongnet.co.uk**	**Various**	**01703 866006**	**Various**	**50Mb**	**Unlimited**	**Unlimited**	**No**
Supanames	www.supanames.co.uk	Value Host	0870 1257678	£13.99	35Mb	1	No	Yes
Supanames	**www.supanames.co.uk**	**Value Host Pro**	**0870 1257678**	**£23.99**	**35Mb**	**Unlimited**	**Yes**	**Yes**
UK Hosting	www.ukhosting.co.uk	5 megs	0845 082 0696	£55.00	20Mb	1	Yes	Yes
UK Hosting	**www.ukhosting.co.uk**	**10 megs**	**0845 082 0696**	**£95.00**	**20Mb**	**1**	**Yes**	**Yes**
UK Hosting	www.ukhosting.co.uk	20 megs	0845 082 0696	£125.00	20Mb	1	Yes	Yes
Verio	**www.verio.co.uk**	**Starter**	**020 7767 3700**	**£109.45**	**10Mb**	**2**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Designer	020 7767 3700	£197.45	50Mb	20	Yes	Yes
Verio	**www.verio.co.uk**	**Business**	**020 7767 3700**	**£274.45**	**125Mb**	**40**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Verio	www.verio.co.uk	Commerce	020 7767 3700	£384.45	175Mb	60	Yes	Yes
Web Fusion	**www.webfusion.co.uk**	**Web Fusion Business Pro**	**0115 9170000**	**£199.00**	**100Mb**	**100**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Web Fusion	www.webfusion.co.uk	Business E-Commerce	0115 9170000	£499.00	100Mb	100	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	**www.webtapestry.com**	**Basic Hosting**	**0800 0151718**	**£35.00**	**10Mb**	**1**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.com	Economy Hosting	0800 0151718	£50.00	25Mb	2	Yes	Yes
Web Tapestry	**www.webtapestry.com**	**Senior Hostings**	**0800 0151718**	**£125.00**	**50Mb**	**5**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Web Tapestry	www.webtapestry.com	Executive Hostings	0800 0151718	£200.00	100Mb	10	Yes	Yes
Xsession	**www.xsession.com**	**Personal Hosting**	**01784 460896**	**£39.00**	**25Mb**	**20**	**Yes**	**No**
Xsession	www.xsession.com	Business Hosting	01784 460896	£94.00	200Mb	100	Yes	No
Xsession	**www.xsession.com**	**Premium Hosting**	**01784 460896**	**£350.00**	**500Mb**	**350**	**Yes**	**No**



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Q&A

ALL OF YOUR INTERNET AND WEB BUILDING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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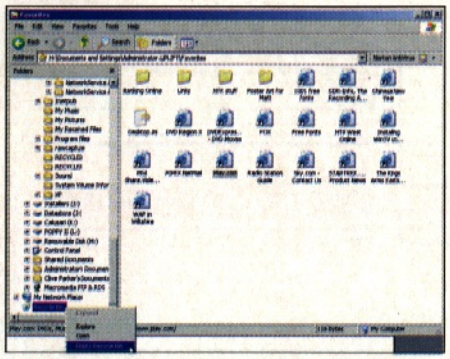
EMAIL **CLIVE PARKER** AT HELPDESK@PARAGON.CO.UK AND SIT BACK AND RELAX WHILE HE SORTS OUT YOUR LIFE

Exporting and reorganising your Favorites is relatively straightforward – as long as you know where to look. Our expert reveals all

Can't delete 'em

Q I've got a problem with some Favorites in Internet Explorer 6. I can't seem to delete them – I keep getting a message that the file is 'read only' when I try to delete it by right-clicking on it in the Favorites pane. Is there any other way to delete these weird Favorites?

David Vincent



Permanently erase files using the Empty Recycle Bin command

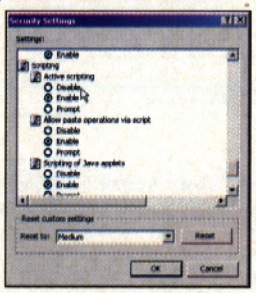
A You should be able to delete the Favorites by right-clicking them in the Favorites pane of Internet Explorer 6. I've tried this and Internet Explorer 6 lets me move them to the Recycle Bin even though the files are read only. Another way to do this is to go to the Favorites folder using Windows Explorer (it's usually in the Windows folder) and deleting the files stored there by dragging them to the Recycle Bin. You'll still get a message asking you if really want to delete the files, click on the 'Yes' button and the files will be removed. Then you can right-click on the Recycle Bin and select the 'Empty Recycle Bin' command to permanently erase the files.

Annoying pop-ups

Q I get really irritated by pop-up advertising windows that open in Internet Explorer 6 when I enter or exit a Web site. Is there any way I can get rid of these windows?

Ed Kowalski

A One way to prevent pop-up windows in Internet Explorer 6 is to disable JavaScript by going to the 'Tools' menu and selecting 'Internet Options'. When the Internet Options control panel opens, click on the 'Security' tab and then click on the 'Custom Level' button. In the Security Settings panel, scroll down to the Scripting options and disable the three scripting options. The drawback to this is that it will stop all JavaScripts from running in your browser. An alternative method is to use a utility called Pop-Up Stopper. You can use it with Internet Explorer 5 and 6 and Netscape 4 and higher. It comes complete with an installation wizard and full uninstall options and an online help file. The program is freeware and it can be downloaded from www.zdnet.com/downloads/stories/info/0,10615,66880,00.html.



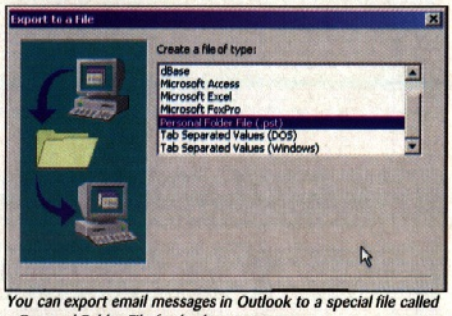
If you disable JavaScript from within Internet Explorer 6 you can stop pop-up windows, but it also stops all other JavaScript pages from working

Export email

Q I've been a *Practical Internet* subscriber for years and love the content and layout. I have a quick question about Outlook Express. I have had to reformat my hard drive twice and each time I loose my messages and block sender file. I realise that I can export the messages to Outlook, but that is also on the same drive. Can you help? Regards.

Rick Hanson

A Once you have transferred your email messages into Outlook 98, 2000 or 2002, it's possible for you to export all messages and contacts to special files called a Personal Folder File with a .PST file extension. Go to the 'File' menu and select the 'Import and Export' command, then select 'Export to a File'. In the next page of the Export wizard, select the 'Personal Folder File' option, then on the next page select the 'Inbox' and include sub-directories. When you are prompted for a file name, save the .PST file in a location you will remember. After you have saved the file you can copy it to a CD-R, CD-RW or ZIP disk for safety. If you use a ZIP or a CD-RW you can simply back up your changed files each week. If you don't want to go to the bother of exporting your new email messages every week, Outlook already stores all of its information in a PST file called outlook.pst, it's usually stored on the boot drive of your PC. If you perform a search you should be able to find it easily, you can then copy this file to CD or ZIP on a weekly basis to back up your email and contacts.



You can export email messages in Outlook to a special file called a Personal Folder File for back up purposes

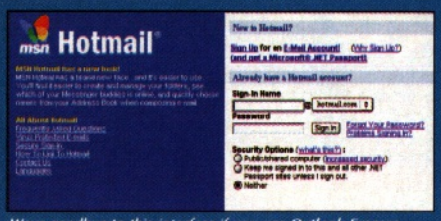
Cannot be displayed

Q I am having a problem using either Internet Explorer 5 or 6 to download files or

Top tip!

Hot(mail) tip

If you have an account with Hotmail, you can check your mail from within Outlook Express, which saves you using the usual browser-based interface. Select 'Accounts' from the 'Tools' menu, then click 'Add a Mail Account' and enter your Hotmail login details.



Wave goodbye to this interface if you use Outlook Express

browse certain sites, yet I have no problems using Netscape Navigator 4.7. The connection to the Internet is a company one using an AT&T managed network via a firewall (belongs to AT&T). On various sites when I try to download a file the following error message is displayed:

```
The page cannot be displayed. The
page you are looking for is
currently unavailable. The Web site
might be experiencing technical
difficulties, or you may need to
adjust your browser settings.
```

This happens quite frequently but if I then use Netscape, it works. If I switch straight back to Internet Explorer 6 it fails again. The Internet options have been checked but it makes no difference. Do you have any advice?

Alan Mortimer

A **I think that it is the Internet options that are causing the problem, the proxy settings to be exact. Judging from your email I suspect that the company firewall and proxy settings have been set up correctly in Netscape Navigator (which has its own internal settings) but they have not been set up correctly within the Internet Options control panel on your PC. Ask your IT guys to check that all proxy and firewall settings have been configured correctly, go to the 'Tools' menu of Internet Explorer 6 and select the 'Connection tab'. Your IT guys will take it from there.**

No go

Q I recently upgraded from Internet Explorer 4 to 5 (and now up to Internet Explorer 6) but have been unable to connect to any Web sites in the browser. Even though I dial out using the dial-up connection from the Start up menu, it still won't connect to the Internet.

I just get a TCP/IP error message. Initially, an error message indicated I had a damaged file so I installed another version of the ws2help.dll file that got rid of the message. A friend had a similar problem and reckoned it was because the old version of Internet Explorer was not completely uninstalled and causing a conflict. Can this situation be solved with reformatting, and is it to do with Internet Explorer?

Mark Trickett

A little too secure

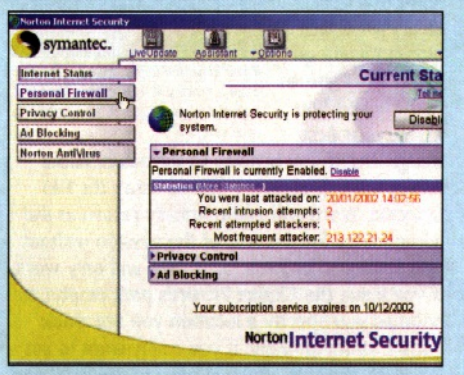
Q I've come across a possible conflict or problem when using Norton Internet Security, Windows XP and Dreamweaver 4 at the same time. When I try to connect to a Web site using Dreamweaver's built-in FTP tools, sometimes Norton throws up the following:

Default Block Sokets de Trois v1. Trojan

and prevents me from making a connection. This message only occurs when I use Dreamweaver to make the FTP connection.

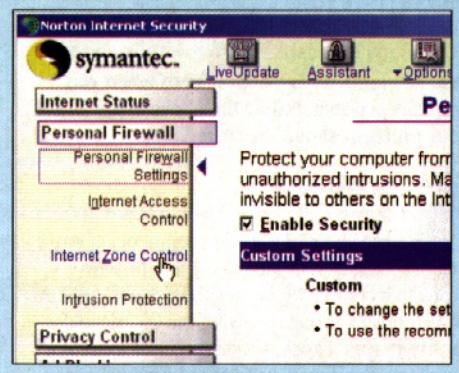
Don West

A **In some instances when an attempted connection is flagged as a Trojan attack it is actually a legitimate connection. This happens when an application or a Web site is using a known Trojan port. Follow these steps to sort the problem out...**



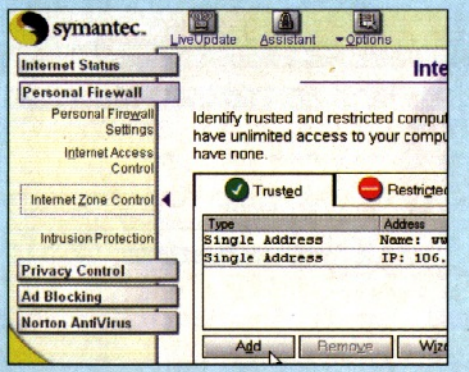
1 Open Norton Internet Security 2002

Open Norton Internet Security 2002 by launching it from the Start menu of Windows XP. When the Norton Internet Security 2002 window opens, click on the 'Personal Firewall' button.



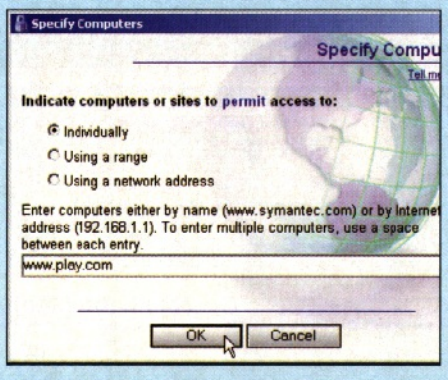
2 Go into the zone

When the Personal Firewall Settings pane opens, click on the 'Internet Zone Control' link in the menu.



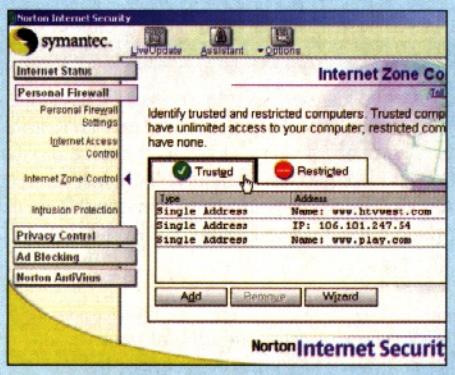
3 Add a Web site

In the Internet Zone Control settings you can add details of Trusted and Restricted Web sites. Click the 'Trusted' tab and then click the 'Add' button.



4 Specify the site

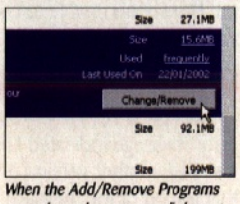
In the Specify Computers dialog box select the 'Individually' radio button option and then type the name of the Web site you want to permit access to in the text field then. After this, click the 'OK' button.



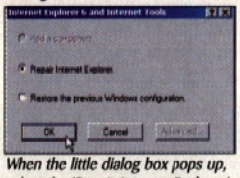
5 Access granted

When you are returned to the Internet Zone Control settings, you will see that the Web address you have just entered has been added to the Trusted list. You should now be able to connect to the Web site using Dreamweaver.

A When you install Internet Explorer 6, it should completely replace the previous versions of any files on your hard drive, so you shouldn't have to uninstall any old version before installing Internet Explorer 6. If you have a problem with Internet Explorer 6 you can repair it using the Add/Remove Programs control panel. Go to the Start menu and select 'Settings', 'Control Panel'. and then select 'Add/Remove Programs'. Make sure you have your Windows CD-ROM and the CD that you installed Internet Explorer 6 from when you start the process. Follow the above steps and your problem should be solved.



When the Add/Remove Programs control panel opens, scroll down to the Microsoft Internet Explorer 6 entry and select it. Now click on the 'Change/Remove' button



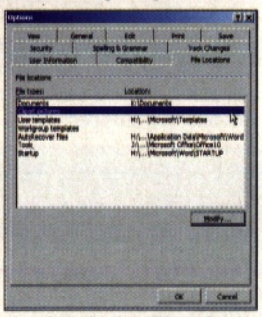
When the little dialog box pops up, select the 'Repair Internet Explorer' radio button and click the 'OK' button. Now follow any on-screen instructions as your Internet Explorer 6 installation is repaired

File locations

Q I've got a bit of a problem in Word 2002. I create a lot of training documents in Word that use images in them. Now, I don't have a problem inserting the images themselves, but I do have problem about specifying the source folder for the images. I know you can specify a directory for clipart pictures using the File Locations tab in Word's Options control panel but I have to change this location every time I start work on a new document. I'm sure I used to be able to browse for images on my hard drive and the file selector would always return to the same folder without me having to specify a location in the Options. I hope you understand what I mean.

Tony Newman

A There is a way to do this in Microsoft Word 2002, but it's an option you must define the first time you specify any file locations in Word. When you install Word, one of the first things you should do is specify the file locations – usually these can be left at their default values, except for the Documents option which you would set to your preferred folder. The important thing to note here is that the path for Clipart Pictures is completely undefined without even a drive letter specified. If you leave this field clear, Word will automatically go to the My Pictures folder when you insert your first image. But if you browse to the actual folder where your images are stored using the File Selector, Word will automatically return to the same folder for the rest of the session without you having to browse for it. This will only work if you leave the Clipart Pictures path empty; as soon as you specify a location you are stuck with it. Unfortunately, if you really want to set Word up like this, you will have to uninstall and then reinstall Word 2002 from scratch.

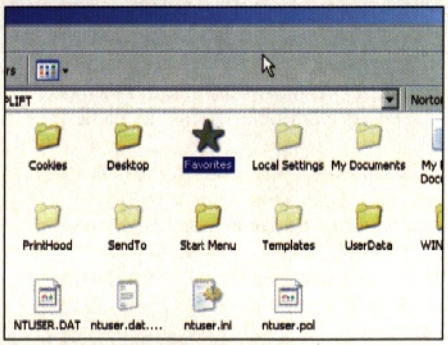

If you leave the Clipart Pictures location empty, Word will remember where it loaded the last image from throughout each session

Lost in space

Q I'm using Internet Explorer 6 on my PC and I am a little worried that I may lose all of my Favorites if I have a catastrophic breakdown of my PC's hard drive. I've lost the contents of a hard drive once before so I want to err on the side of caution. I'd like to save a backup copy of the Internet Explorer 6 Favorites on ZIP disk or even on CD-R or CD-RW. Where are the Internet Explorer 6 Favorites stored? I'm using Windows XP Home Edition.

John Robinson

A That's easy enough to sort out, John. In Windows 98 and Windows ME the Favorites folder is in the main Windows folder, which you can back up by copying it to a floppy disk, ZIP disk or to a CD-R or CD-RW. In Windows XP there are separate Favorites folders set up for each user who has an account on the PC. These folders are stored in the Documents and Settings folder in the root of the hard drive. In your case, if your account name is John Robinson then your Favorites folder is at C:\Documents and Settings\John Robinson\Favorites.



You can copy your Favorites folder to a floppy disk or even burn them onto a CD

Getting connected

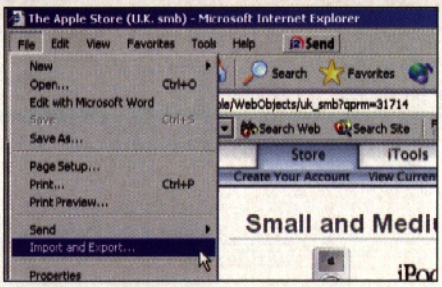
Q I sometimes connect to the Internet without meaning to because a program I

Printing Favorites

Q I've just upgraded to Internet Explorer 6 and I'm really quite impressed with it. In fact, I probably won't go back to Netscape 6 because I've had too many problems with it. Anyway, I was just wondering if it's possible to print out my Internet Explorer 6 Favorites list in any way?

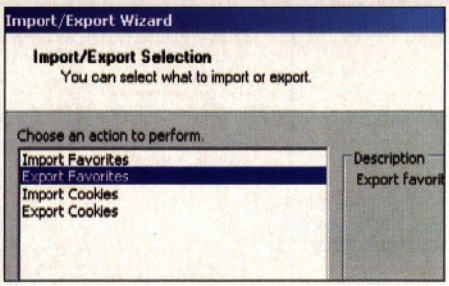
Doug Phillips

A You can print out a list of your Internet Explorer 6 Favorites by exporting the list as an HTML file then opening it in the browser and using the Print command in the File menu. Follow these steps to find out how.



1 Use Import and Export

Start by opening Internet Explorer 6, then go to the 'File' menu and select the 'Import and Export' command.



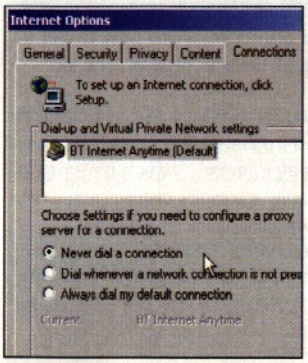
2 Export Favorites

When the Import/Export Wizard opens, click on the 'Next' button. In the next window, select 'Export Favorites' then click 'Next'.

am using dials automatically without me realising. Sometimes I'm connected to the Internet for up to an hour before I notice and my phone bills are huge. I will probably join one of the 'Anytime' Internet accounts available (any suggestions?) but I would still like to know how to stop my PC from connecting to the Internet by itself.

Steve Burton

A **Good news Steve, you can solve this problem in a couple of minutes. Launch Internet Explorer 6 and go to the 'Tools' menu and select the 'Internet Options' command. When the Internet Options control panel opens, click on the 'Connection' tab. There are three radio buttons in the connection area – you should make sure that the 'Never dial a connection' option is selected, as this will prevent any unwanted connections. Now all you have to do is remember to connect to the Internet manually whenever you want to collect email or browse the Web. As for unlimited connections, I have been using BT Internet Anytime for about eight months and I've never had a problem connecting at any time. I can't really comment on any other services but my sister has a Freeserve Anytime accounts and she says that she has never experienced any problems with it.**



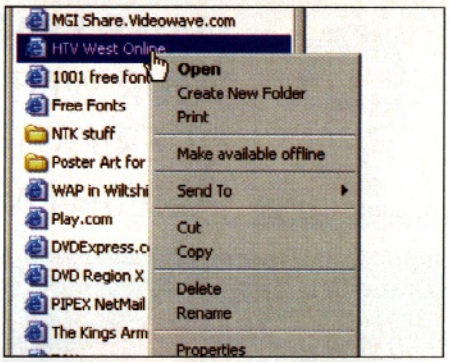
Selecting the 'Never dial a connection' radio button will prevent unwanted connections to the Internet

Sort it out

Q I was reading one of your rival Internet magazines when I came across the solution to a problem I have had for a while now. How do I sort the Favorites menu in Internet Explorer? In the magazine – which I won't name to spare any embarrassment to them – they said that all you had to do was right-click the Favorites list in IE6 and select the Sort By Name command. Whenever I right-click on the list I get several options but the Sort command is not among them. I assume there is a way to sort the Favorites list and I am sure that I could have saved myself £4.99 if I had asked you in the first place.

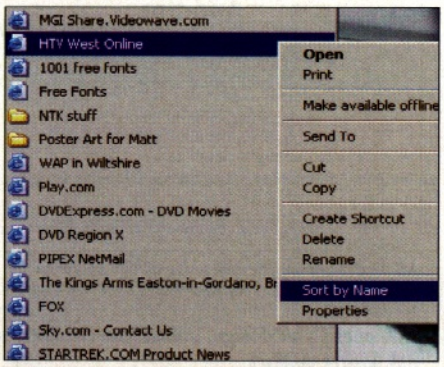
Richard Kimble

A **You're right, there is a way to sort the Favorites menu alphabetically. In fact, I get asked this question nearly every month. So for all newcomers to *Practical Internet* magazine, here's how you do it.**



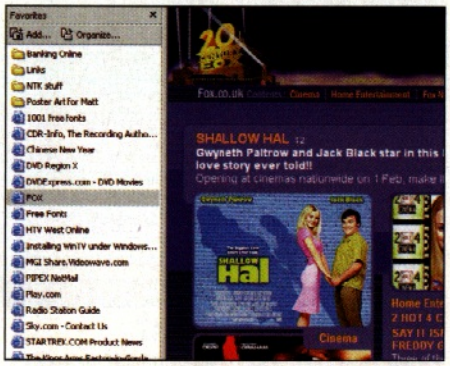
1 Not in Internet Explorer!

No matter how many times you right-click on the Favorites list in the Favorites pane of Internet Explorer 6, you'll never see a Sort By Name option.



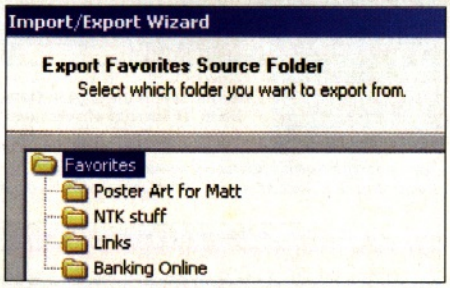
2 Use the Start Menu

The only way you can sort the Internet Explorer Favorites is to do it from the Start menu. Click on the menu and open the 'Favorites' list. Now right-click on any entry in the list and the elusive Sort By Name command appears. Click it!



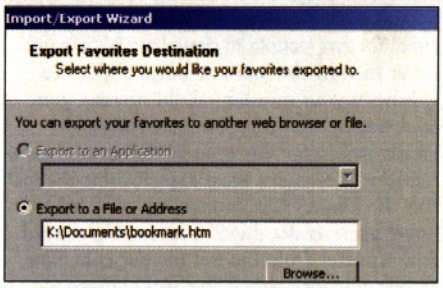
3 A sorted list

Now if you reopen Internet Explorer 6 and take a peek at the Favorites pane you will see that all the entries are now sorted alphabetically. Until you add the next item, of course.



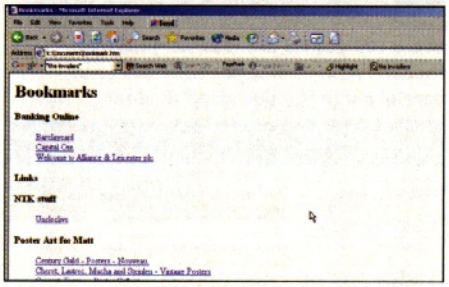
3 Select the folder

On the next page of the Import/Export Wizard, select the 'Favorites' folder so that it is highlighted and click the 'Next' button.



4 Choose a location

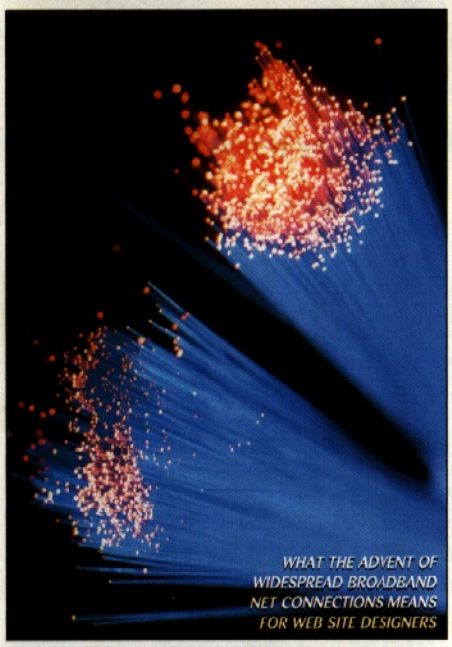
The 'Export to a File or Address' option is already highlighted, so use the 'Browse' button to select a destination to save the HTML file in to.



5 Print the page

Use the 'Open' command in the File menu of IE6 to open the file you have just saved – it is displayed as a Web page. Go to 'Print' in the File menu to print your Favorites list.

JAMES SEABRIGHT ANSWERS YOUR WEB SITE BUILDING QUERIES. EMAIL HIM ON JAMES@PARAGON.CO.UK

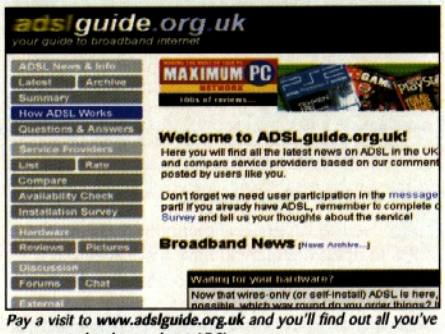


Broadband or bust?

Q Now high speed Net connections are widely available, is it okay to make Web pages that use big graphics and other bandwidth-hungry content like video and sound effects? As someone who has recently got a DSL connection, I was also wondering whether it's possible to run a Web server from my PC to save money on hosting.

Andrea Hastie

A **Although high speed connections such as DSL and cable modems are more commonly available, the vast majority of Net users still access the Web via a normal modem. As a result, you still need to be careful about the download time for all the Web pages you design, unless you're happy to risk losing visitors.**



*Pay a visit to **www.adslguide.org.uk** and you'll find out all you've ever wanted to know about ADSL*

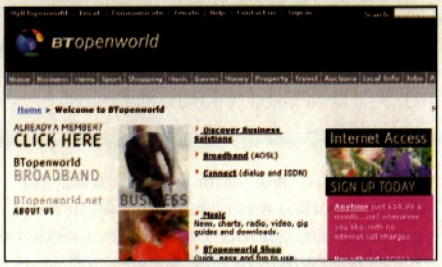
A good rule of thumb is to keep the total size of the HTML code and all images under 60 kilobytes. This can be achieved by optimising your graphics (see the step-by-step on page 124) and splitting long Web pages into a number of shorter units.

There is nothing wrong with providing material on your Web site that caters for people with high speed connections. For instance, you could place links to video content or larger versions of graphics on the site for optional viewing. The main thing is to avoid forcing people to download big files in order to view the 'normal' parts of the site.

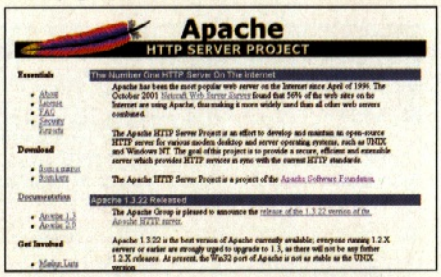
Now to your question about running your own Web server. DSL connections are not ideally suited for that type of application, for a number of reasons. Most significant is the fact that the kind of DSL connection provided to home users is designed to favour high speed data transfer from the Net to your computer, rather than vice versa. This would make a busy Web site become very slow to load and hard to access.

There are other problems and pitfalls to consider. Does your ISP allow the running of Web servers over its connections? BT's original DSL package for home users does not support the 'Port Forwarding' method required to make Web hosting possible, while other ISPs allocate dynamic IP addresses to users, so you need to reconfigure your domain forwarding settings each time the IP address changes. Apart from these issues, you have to keep your computer turned on around the clock to make your site continually available and realise that a busy site will slow down your own use of the machine. All in all, it's a rather troublesome way to go about things, so it's probably best to host in a more conventional way. That said, hosting via DSL may be useful for short-term purposes or testing a site.

You can find out more about how to get a server running at www.adslguide.org.uk.



BT Openworld is one of the ISPs who might not be suited to users hoping to run Web servers over their ADSL connections



*Apache is the leading free Web server solution and can be downloaded from **http://httpd.apache.org** if you're a Windows or Linux user*

Monitor your site's availability

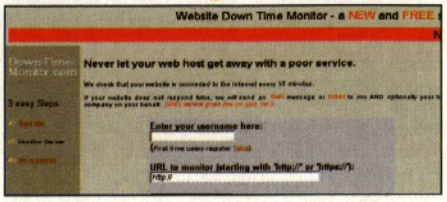
Q I've been frustrated by service outages at my hosting company, which have made my site unavailable at various crucial points over the last few months! Is there any way I can monitor my site and be notified of it going offline? This would at least be useful in chasing up my hosting company to find out why it's not providing the round-the-clock service I'd like.

Ben Sutcliffe

A **Various 'downtime monitors' exist, which usually send you an email whenever your site is going offline. I have been using InternetSeer for some time now, and it has proved very reliable in alerting me to problems. This hasn't stopped my hosting company from occasional 34 minute outages, but at least I know when they happen! You can get the service for yourself at www.internetseer.com. Its paid-for service offers more frequent checks to the site and a nifty feature that checks all your links work.**

A very recent launch is Down Time Monitor (www.down-time-monitor.com), which

You can receive monthly reports and instant warning emails from InternetSeer summarising how much your site has been out of service



New kid on the block Down Time Monitor will soon let you receive site warnings via text message

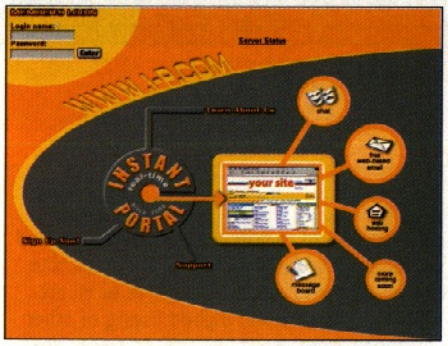
promises to inform users of site problems by text message (although that aspect of the service is not scheduled to go live until 1 July). However, the free service does check more frequently than InternetSeer.

Everyone Net nasty

Q I have been using Everyone.Net to provide a free Web mail service to my site's visitors. However, it has recently started piling on extra adverts, making the whole thing really slow to use. I was wondering if there are any other services that might be better? And what happens to people with existing email accounts when I change over?

Mark Beckett

Use www.bigmailbox.com to provide visitors to your site with the opportunity of getting a free email account



Instant Portal (www.i-p.com) offers a range of free services

A **There has been a lot of online discussion about Everyone.Net changing its policy. It doesn't offer the Email Express service to new users any more – you must sign up to a pay service instead. Presumably the extra adverts are an attempt to cover the costs of the remaining free service customers like you. Before moving to other similar services, you might like to consider upgrading to Everyone's ad-free paid service. You should at least offer continued access to the free service for existing account holders, by providing those users with a link not accessible from elsewhere on your site, thus preventing new users from signing up.**

Alternative free services to look at are www.zzn.com, www.bigmailbox.com and www.i-p.com. The last one (Instant Portal) actually offers a more wide-ranging range of services such as news and search facilities,

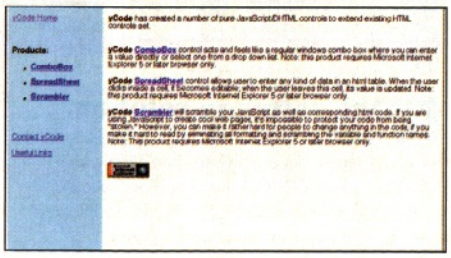
From Excel with love

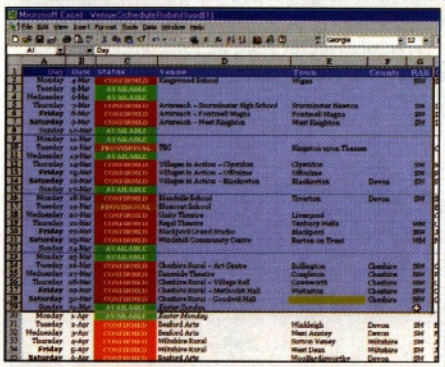
Q I have a complicated spreadsheet in Excel format, and need to put some of the information on the Net for people to access. I see that there is a 'Save to Web' option in the File menu, but I don't want to save the whole spreadsheet in Web page format. Is there any way that I can convert just one section instead?

Stuart Parry

A **Spreadsheets are structured in rows and columns, making them perfect for direct conversion into HTML tables. The steps shown to the right explain how to convert particular areas of an Excel spreadsheet into Web format. These are based on Excel 2000 and the exact procedure will vary for other versions.**

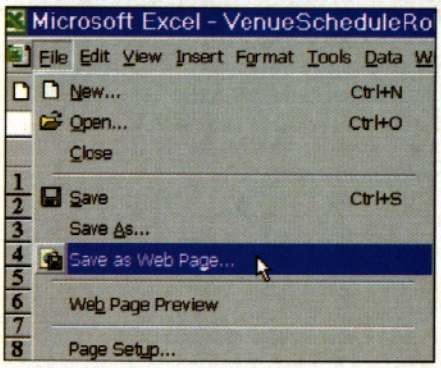
Readers who aren't using Excel but do want to convert from spreadsheets need not despair – there are various shareware products that can help convert to the Web. Take a look athttp://home.hccnet.nl/s.j.francke/t2t/text2table.htm for one example, which converts from CSV (Comma Separated Values), a format in which most spreadsheet packages can save files. If you need to provide users with the opportunity to edit the converted spreadsheets in a Web browser, www.ycode.com offers a shareware JavaScript that does just that.





1 Highlight the section

First, you must highlight the cells you want to convert for the Web, by moving the mouse pointer across them with the left button held down. If you want to convert more than one area just repeat this whole process for each individual area.

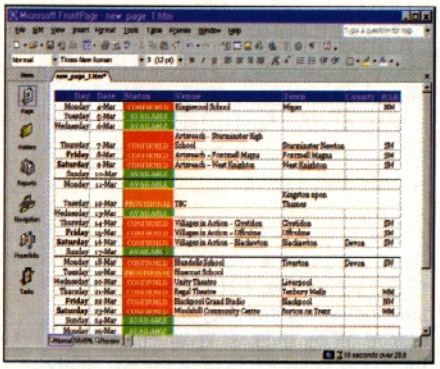


2 Two ways forward

To convert the selected content, select 'Save as Web page' from the 'File' menu. Alternatively, you can try transferring the selected data into an existing Web editing package by selecting 'Copy' from the 'Edit' menu and skipping to step four.

3 Set conversion options

You now need to click the 'Selection' radio button as shown here. Otherwise the whole spreadsheet will be converted. Enter a file name for the Web page and click 'Save'. Then load the page into a Web browser to check your results



4 Paste straight into an editor

The results will vary depending on the package you're using. Just select 'Paste' from the 'Edit' menu and see what happens! Here we show that FrontPage handles it admirably; other packages might need you to create a table and then paste into it.

with the aim of making your site an all-round useful place to be. Just ensure that your site doesn't become crowded because of all the add-ons! You can find a good listing of other similar services at www.dmoz.org/Computers/Internet/E-mail/Webmaster_Providers.

Count on your visitors

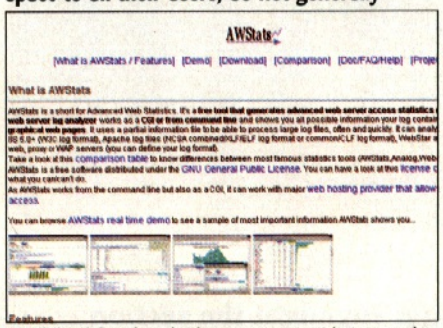
Q I have set up my own site and want to know if it's successful. What can I find out about my site visitors? I'm keen to discover what pages people are looking at and how many times my site has been viewed, but can't stand the idea of an unsightly counter.

Fiona Robertson

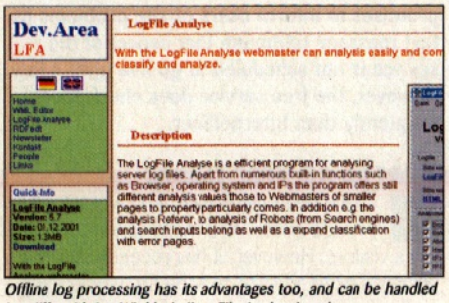
A **The most comprehensive and reliable way of producing analyses of site visitors and what they're looking at is through one of the many software packages that analyse Web server log files. If your Web host will allow you to run CGI scripts, the best way forward is to install a script that creates online reports about visitor activity. You could try AWStats from http://awstats.sourceforge.net.**

Readers without CGI access should install software on their PC. Although you have to download the log file, it has the advantage of working entirely offline and allowing the storage of access reports on your hard disk. If you can cope with badly translated English, head to www.jan-winkler.de/dev/e_logf.htm to get hold of Jan Winkler's freeware program.

Free providers, such as ISPs who give Web space to all their users, do not generally make these available. If you use such a company as a host, it's probably best to try and find alternative tracking solutions. A good place to start is the versatile and free Extreme Tracking service available from www.extreme-dm.com. This actually goes further than Web server log files, by checking on the screen size and other characteristics of the visitor's computer. This can be useful if you're trying to find out more about how your site is seen by other people.



Detailed Web-based graphical reports on your Web site are only minutes away if you have CGI and log file access, thanks to AWStats (http://awstats.sourceforge.net)



Offline log processing has its advantages too, and can be handled in a jiffy with Jan Winkler's 'Log File Analyse' package

Pick a card, any card...

Q I'd like to provide an eCard service to my site visitors. Is this going to involve lots of complicated programming or can you recommend a site that will help me through it more gently?

Veronica Beale

A **Electronic greetings cards are a good way to increase your visitor base, because the recipients of the cards have to visit your site in order to see the message they've been sent. Whether they then decide to explore your pages is another matter, but**

Readers' tips

Relieve frame frustration

I'm rather annoyed by sites that provide links to my pages but that leave the user stuck inside their frame design. This makes my efforts to create a beautiful site rather futile! However, I have discovered some JavaScript that I use after the <body> tag of all my pages to make the browser escape from other people's framesets. I hope this is useful to some other readers of your excellent magazine.

Mark Purkiss

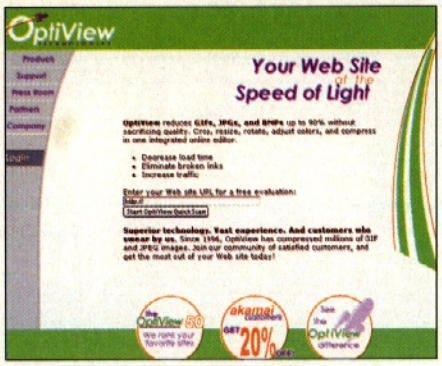
```
<script type="javascript">
<!–
if (top.frames.length!=0) {
  if (window.location.href.replace)
    top.location.replace(self.location.href);
  else
    top.location.href=self.document.href;
}
// –>
</script>
```

Put your graphics on a diet

Q I've read that it's a good idea to 'optimise' graphics for use on the Web but don't really know how to go about this. Do I need to worry about it at all? I should mention that I'm building the site with shareware software, and can't afford to spend much money.

Audrey West

A **Optimising Web graphics is something that everyone with a site should do, and they needn't be scared off by the cost involved. As the following steps explain, there are plenty of free or very cheap ways of making your graphics as small as possible without sacrificing too much quality.**



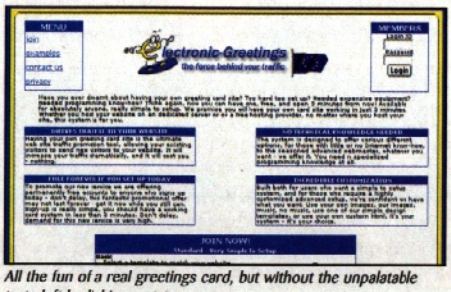
1 Check with OptiView

The excellent www.optiview.com service will examine your site and let you know how your graphics could be optimised. Cutting them down to size is a service it offers for a modest fee, but it's worth it if you've not got much time on your hands.

2 The software solution

Whereas OptiView will process images online for you, there's lots of software that allow you to handle graphics offline. Web Graphics Optimiser comes highly recommended; you can download a free trial version from www.webopt.com.

it's worth a try! At the time of writing, www.electronic-greetings.com is offering a free service that will let visitors send postcards from your site. However, the Web site does suggest that it may not always be free to sign up for this service, so be sure to get in there quick!



All the fun of a real greetings card, but without the unpalatable taste left by licking a stamp

Online payment conundrum

Q I run a hobby site that sells a few low-value items each week and am keen to link up with some kind of online payment service, rather than using my current method of having the buyer send me a cheque. I have heard that PayPal might do the trick, but having checked out Usenet, I am worried about the mixed press it has received. Suggestions for alternatives would be useful!

M Barker

A There is an ever-growing range of online payment service providers, so you should easily find one that suits your needs. PayPal (www.paypal.com) has had its fair share of problems, both relating to its own practices and those of unscrupulous sellers. It is far too easy for sellers to take money and never supply goods, and PayPal doesn't provide buyers with protection against this. PayPal itself has received bad press for freezing merchant accounts, and refusing to reimburse the remaining balance. This is normally part of its attempt to clean up the service, but has hit some genuine vendors. This and other problems have led to the growth of anti-PayPal sites like www.paypalwarning.com. This site actually provides a good, comprehensive list of alternative payment services, which are worth considering.

One important fact to remember about Paypal and similar services like www.bidpay.com and www.anypay.com is that they don't operate with the same sort of guarantees as buying via credit card, even if the buyer uses one to settle the bill with the payment service. You might want to consider an escrow service like www.escrow.com instead, which cost a little more in terms of processing fees, but provide better peace of mind to both parties.

An escrow service acts as intermediary between buyer and seller, providing an all-round safer way of doing business on the Net without getting involved in expensive credit card merchant accounts

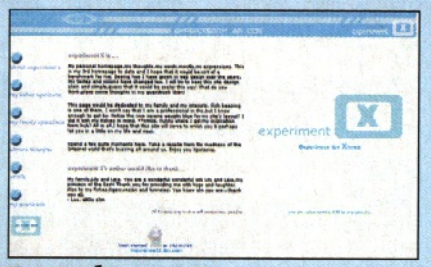
3 Paint Shop Pro Wizardry

This ever-popular graphics package, downloadable from **www.jasc.com** in a trial version, includes rather nifty GIF and JPEG optimisation tools that can help you squeeze images to the smallest size possible. The JPEG tool is shown in action here.

4 Find out more

There's a lot more to find out about Web graphics. One good place to read up on the subject is part of the About.com mini-site dedicated to HTML: **http://html.about.com/cs/optimizingimages.**

Design Doctor



Experiment X

Creator: Andy Sim
URL: http://experimentx.8m.com

Andy's site is a very creative home page, featuring a wide range of writing and other artistic creations by this *Practical Internet* reader based in Singapore. The Design Doctor likes the site, but there is still room for improvement.

POP-UP PARIAH

Does anybody actually like pop-up advertisements? As is the case with a lot of people, Andy uses a free provider. Unfortunately, his provider makes its money by forcing these evil pop-ups on each and every page of his site. It might be worth considering an upgrade to a host which either costs money or doesn't use pop-up adverts. Take a look at **http://free-web-hosting.nettop20.com** for some suggestions.

'BEST VIEWED IN' = CARDINAL SIN

Why do Web site designers place messages saying 'Best Viewed In [Insert Name Of High Spec Browser]'? The whole point of Web design is that it works with all browsers; if it doesn't the offending content should at least downgrade enough so that people still running a four-year old beta version of Netscape can see it. Take a look at **www.anybrowser.org/campaign** for more rants along these lines and some advice on how to mend your ways.

GRAPHICAL GROAN

The Doctor is going to hold his breath and accept that some people like pastel blue navigation systems. But he will not remain silent about one of his pet hates, namely the needless use of large graphics when smaller ones would suffice. This is a particular problem on the fish tank page, which takes a long time to download over a modem connection. Take a look at the graphic optimisation tutorial on page 124 for more advice and pointers.

POWERFUL YET SIMPLE INTERNET SOLUTIONS

Simply Names

'Europe's Leading Domain Registrar'

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.at AUSTRIA	.ch SWITZERLAND	.de GERMANY
.dk DENMARK	.ro ROMANIA	.lu LUXEMBOURG
.pl POLAND	.be BELGIUM	and many more...

Simply Hosting

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Account-	Mail	Soho	Enterprise	Corporate
Web Space	×	50Mb	100Mb	150Mb
Pop3 Mail Boxes	✓	×	×	×
Email Forwarding	✓	✓	✓	✓
Email Aliases	✓	✓	✓	✓
Web Forwarding	✓	×	×	×
Unlimited FTP	×	✓	✓	✓
Cgi-Bin	×	✓	✓	✓
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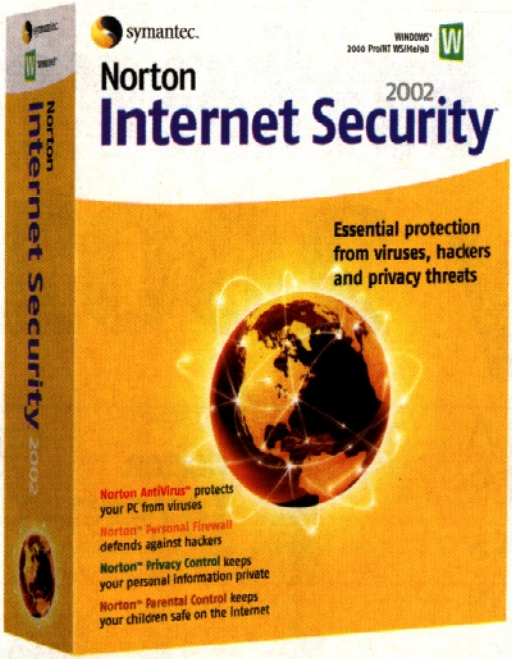
Reviews

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO ALL THE LATEST NEW INTERNET HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE



Norton Internet Security 2002

Let Norton give your computer a fighting chance against Internet viruses – reviewed on page 128

Philips EXP303

It's a CD and MP3 CD playing dream. Read all about the EXP303 on page 134

On test this issue...

Sky Sports Manager

Steer a team to football glory against other armchair managers with this game 132

Antivirus Titanium

Quickly eradicate any viruses that manage to worm their way on your PC 132

VideoStudio 6

Whip up some audio visual masterpieces with this impressive package 133

Apple iPod

Apple takes the lead in the style stakes once more with its beautiful MP3 player 136

Sony VAIO PCV-RX1

Check out this ultra-trendy PC from Sony and give your connectivity a boost 136

RF Optical Mouse

Rid yourself of troublesome wires with this tail-less optical mouse 137

Mustek MDC 3000

With its combination of form and function, this is an ideal first digicam 137

Welcome...

AS THE NUMBER of vicious viruses lurking on the Internet continues to rise, it's a necessity these days to ensure that you're PC is well guarded. This month we look at the latest security utility from the masters of protection in the shape of Norton Internet Security 2002. We also cast our eyes over another bug-bashing application, Panda Antivirus Titanium, as well as a new online football management game from Sky Sports and Ulead's latest video editing package.

If digital music is your bag, check out our review of the Philips EXP303 MP3 CD player on page 134 and Apple's gorgeous iPod on 136. Also on test this month is the funky Sony VAIO desktop, a digital camera and a cordless optical mouse.

James Thornton, Staff Writer

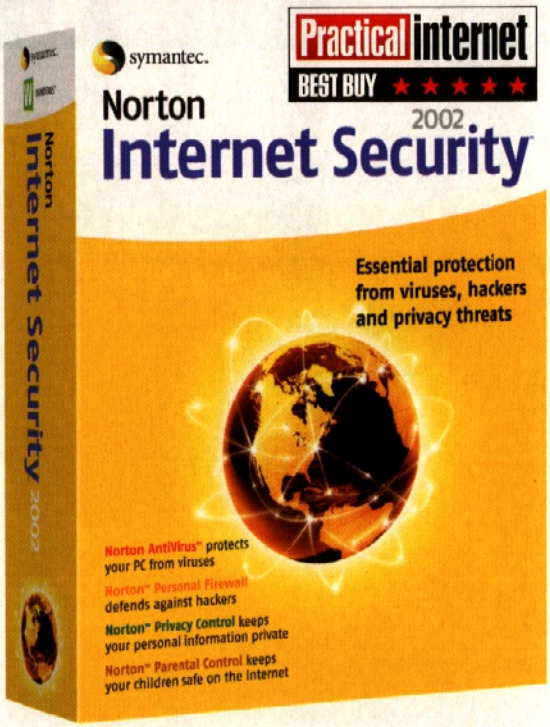
Our reviewing system

Look out for the 'Best Buy' logo. This cherished accolade is only awarded to the best products each month

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

Norton Internet Security 2002

VIRUSES AND HACKERS POSE A BIGGER THREAT THAN EVER BEFORE. **CLIVE PARKER** LOOKS AT WHAT SYMANTEC HAS BEEN DOING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM



There's no denying that security has become a major issue for home users connecting to the Internet. Even just a few years ago, no one would be particularly worried about going online from home using their ISP connection and modem to collect their email, browse the Web or perform any other standard Net-based activity. Of course, businesses have to be protected by elaborate firewalls and other safeguards to make sure that systems are secure, but hackers aren't interested in home PCs are they?

As it happens, they are. They may not be specifically interested in you as a person, but they are interested in using your PC as a tool and a resource. Okay, there's a possibility that information such as your credit card details could be gleaned from your hard drive, but hackers are usually more interested in other scams. Last year, several big corporations were subject to something called 'denial of service' attacks where thousands of PCs all tried to access the same Web site at the same time. The PCs weren't actually trying to open Web pages to view them, they repeatedly requested the same Web address again and again hundreds of times a second, in order to overload the Web server by sending it more requests than it could handle.

Of course, the hackers didn't use their own PCs to do this. Instead, they infiltrated hundreds of PCs in offices and homes, installed the attack program on them and then sat back and waited for the attack to take place. When the PCs started the attack, the people who actually owned them didn't have a clue anything was going on.

Another favourite trick actually earns money for the hackers. Here's what they do. A Trojan program is sneaked onto your PC while you are online and quietly installs itself. When the PC is shut down, the Trojan program bides its time and then goes into action. It powers up the PC without switching on the monitor and then makes an international phone connection to a premium rate number usually somewhere in the former USSR. This connection then remains open without any indication that the PC is doing anything – even the hard drive spins down to stop any noise. This process carries on until you're alerted to the problem by a hefty phone bill for hundreds or even thousands of pounds. Worryingly, this kind of scam is more common than you'd think.

THE ODDS ARE THAT YOUR HOME PC HAS ALREADY BEEN ATTACKED

Protect and survive

But how likely are you to be attacked on your own home PC? Surprisingly, the odds are that you've already been attacked by some kind of Trojan or snooping program and you don't even know it's happened unless you have some kind of protection running on your machine. When I connect to the Internet using ISDN – and I stay online for long periods because it's my job – my PC is always attacked. Every single time. It may be after an hour online, or it may be within minutes of connecting to the Net. But it always happens.

Luckily my PC is protected. I've been using Norton Internet Security – a dual product comprising Norton AntiVirus and Norton Personal Firewall – since the earliest versions were available. Now it's up to the 2002 version and comes with a host of improvements, new features and general enhancements over previous incarnations, as well as being fully Windows XP compatible.

Symantec has improved the automation of Norton Internet Security so it's easier for the less technical among us to use it without problems, but it has also increased the level of customisation available so that the more technical can configure it exactly as required. Here's a good example. You may have an annoying

program installed on your PC that dials the Internet when you least expect it, but you can't figure out how to disable it so it doesn't connect. Using the Personal Firewall Internet Access Control you can single out the specific program causing the problem and instruct the firewall software to prevent that program from accessing the Internet. You can even set it up so that a warning message pops up if it attempts to make a connection.

When you first install Norton Internet Security you will be prompted to create rules for programs that access the Internet, but even this has been simplified. Rules for common programs like Internet Explorer 6, Outlook Express, Outlook and other popular Internet tools are created automatically. As various programs access the Net, pop-up messages ask you if you want to permit or block Internet access.

New features in Norton Internet Security 2002 include an improved email scanning system – Norton AntiVirus no longer changes the mail server addresses and it scans both incoming and outgoing email and attachments. If you are one of the many homes that have a couple of PCs networked together, the Home Network Wizard ensures that both PCs can talk to each other without any problems. MSN Messenger, AOL Instant Messenger and Windows Messenger 4 messages are all scanned for safety.

As with a lot of other Internet software, Norton Internet Security updates itself over the Internet. I always used to regularly check for upgrades and new virus and Trojan definitions manually on a Saturday morning. Now I let Norton Internet Security check automatically whenever I connect to the Internet. The first I usually know about an update is a little pop-up window telling me the update has been successful. Great stuff.

Obviously, most people reading *Practical Internet* still use the Internet as a means of entertainment and source of information, but increasingly many are using the Net for business and as an important avenue of communication. With this in mind, it's becoming increasingly important to protect the integrity of your data not just from viruses, but from online attacks. Norton Internet Security 2002 is probably the best protection on the market for the PC and you'd be an absolute fool not to consider it as part of your online toolkit. Very highly recommended.

The verdict

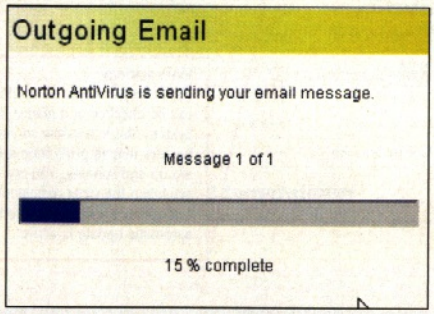
Software: Norton Internet Security 2002
Price: £42.82 download /£50.32 Boxed
Tel: n/a
URL: www.symantec.com

Features:	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★☆
Value for money:	★★★★★
Overall:	★★★★★

✔ Excellent auto-update feature

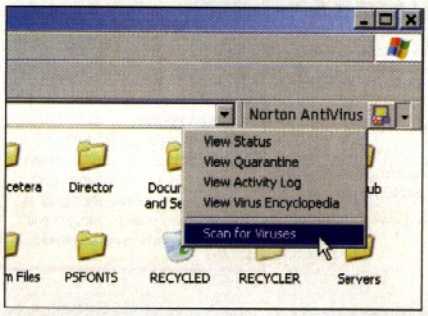
✖ We have to say, it's pretty perfect

What's new in Internet Security 2002?



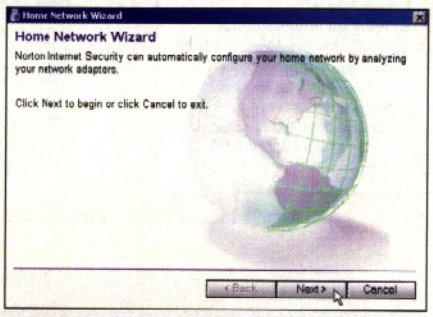
1 Email scanning

Earlier versions scanned incoming email for attached viruses. The 2002 version still does this, but it also scans your outgoing email so you can be confident that any mail you send to friends and family will be safe.



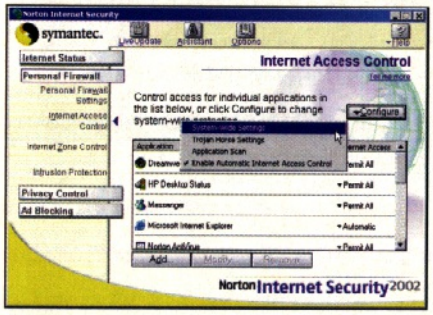
2 Explorer integration

The new version of AntiVirus 2002 integrates with Windows Explorer on your PC. This makes it easy for you to perform virus scans on suspicious files in the Explorer window, without opening Norton Internet Security first.



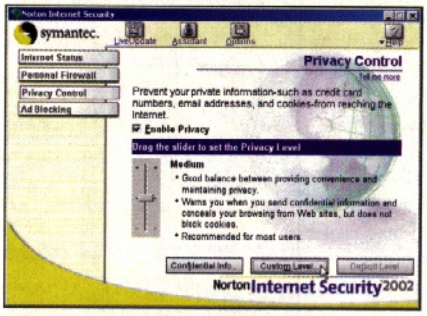
3 Home Network Wizard

More and more people are buying a second PC for the home and linking them together. The Home Network Wizard built into Personal Firewall enables you to quickly set up access between PCs on your home network.



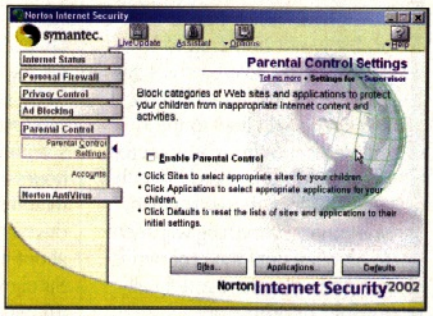
4 Internet Access Control

The improved Internet Access Control is now much more configurable than before and gives you total control over which programs can access the Internet on your PC. You can set individual settings or system-wide controls.



5 Privacy Control

A new feature of the Privacy Control lets you filter content sent out as part of messages using AOL Instant Messenger, Windows Messenger 4 or MSN Messenger, ensuring personal details are not revealed to others.



6 Parental Control Wizard

The Parental Control Wizard enables you to easily set up password protected access to the features of Norton Internet Security. Using the Parental Controls, you can be sure that your children are not accessing dodgy information.

Internet Status
The main area of Norton Internet Security provides you with an update of the status of your Internet connection. From here you can toggle protection on and off, check the status and generate detailed reports.

Assistant and Options
The Assistant button and the Options button are available from every screen of Norton Internet Security and provide access to setup wizards such as the Parental Control Wizard and to advanced configuration options and reports.

Personal Firewall
The Personal Firewall settings are probably the most important aspect of Norton Internet Security. By using these four options, you can control the way your PC accesses the Internet and block any unauthorised access to your PC from outside.

Privacy Control
By using the Privacy Control options in Norton Internet Security, you can ensure that personal information such as telephone numbers, your address, bank and credit card details are filtered out of any information sent by email, cookies and instant messages.

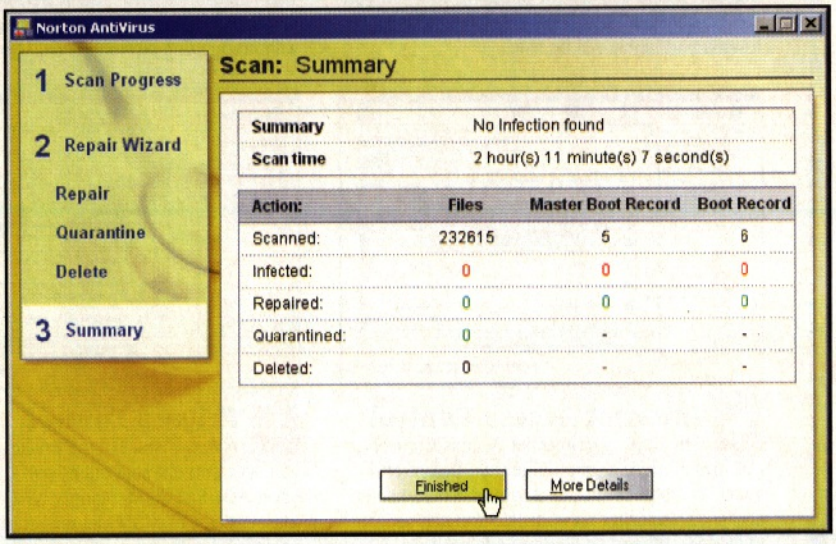
Norton AntiVirus
The other major component of Norton Internet Security is Norton AntiVirus. The menu options here enable you to control the status of the program, scan for viruses and generate reports on virus attacks.

Virus settings
The settings of Norton AntiVirus can be checked at a glance in the System Status window so you can be sure that all protection schemes are up and running. You can also see when the virus definitions were last updated and check whether the automatic update is active.

Spare 40 minutes to scan your PC for viruses

IF YOU HAVE a large hard drive in your PC – and most new PCs now come with a minimum of a 10G drive – then you've probably not bothered to perform a complete virus scan because of the length of time it takes. This can lead to future problems if there is an infected program on your hard drive that only activates the virus when you run it. Everything will seem to be okay until the program is run, then you start getting all-manner of problems.

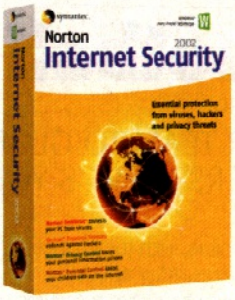
The best thing to do is set aside some time to perform a full scan of your system. Why not perform the scan while you are watching a film or a TV programme? The time taken for a complete scan depends on the size of your hard drive. As a yardstick, on a system with 54Gb on three separate drives, a full scan finished after 2 hours and 11 minutes, so a 10Gb drive should take about 40 minutes. Surely you can spare 40 minutes to safeguard your PC?



Just 40 minutes could mean the difference between a working PC and one that is riddled with viruses

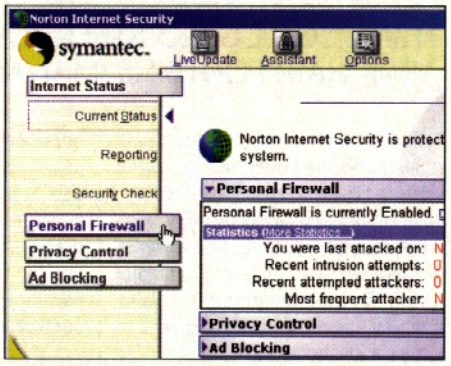
Configuring Internet access

SET UP NORTON INTERNET SECURITY TO CREATE AUTOMATIC RULES FOR PROGRAMS



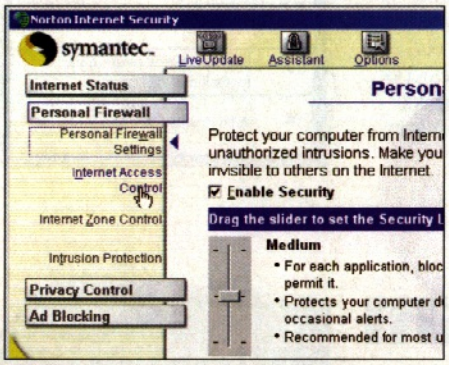
THE NEW VERSION of Norton Internet Security is very good at setting up Internet access levels for many programs automatically. Applications such as Internet Explorer 6, Outlook Express 6 and other popular Internet programs are configured automatically by Norton Internet Security the first time they run after it is installed. This is very good and saves you a lot of time configuring the access level of programs manually.

On the other hand, there may be some applications on your PC that don't access the Internet on a regular basis. The programs may simply use the Internet to check for updates and upgrades in the same way as Norton Internet Security updates itself. Many applications now do this, shareware, freeware and commercial programs alike. You can change the settings so that Norton Internet Security creates automatic rules, you can block access, permit full access or customise a program so that it can send data out over the Net but prevent it from downloading data to your PC. This versatility is one of Norton Internet Security's best ways of protecting your PC from attack.



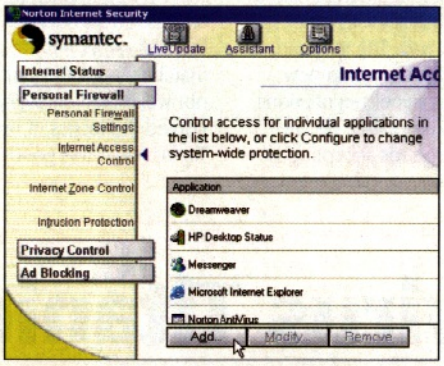
1 Firewall controls

Open Norton Internet Security 2002 by right clicking the system tray icon and selecting 'Open' or by going to the Start menu and launching it from the Programs menu. When the program opens, click 'Personal Firewall'.



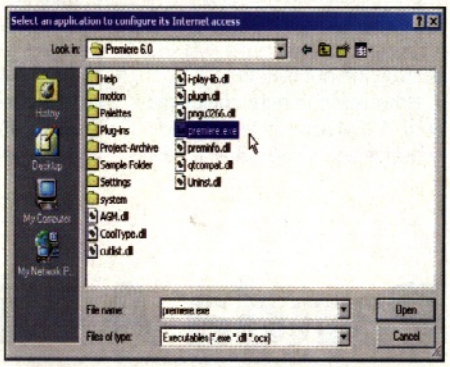
2 Switch screens

When the Personal Firewall menu opens you have four options available. These control all aspects of the Personal Firewall setup, but we want the Internet Access Control page, so click on the link in the Personal Firewall menu.



3 Using the control

When the Internet Access Control opens, you can see a list of programs that have already had rules created for them. If you want to add a new program to the list that you know has Internet capabilities, click on the 'Add' button.

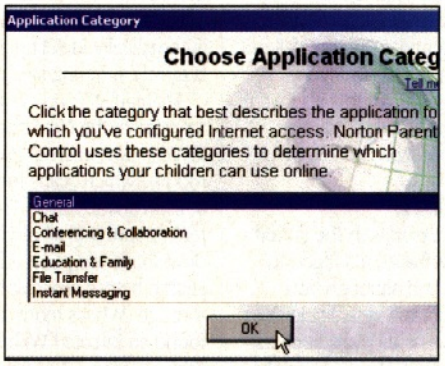


4 Select the application

Choose the application to configure a rule for. Use the file selector to browse to the location of the program. Most programs are stored within sub-folders in the Program Files directory on drive C. Select the **.EXE** file of the program and click 'Open'.

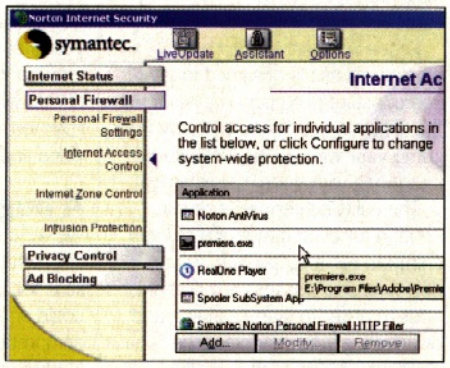
5 Customise access

Norton Internet Security pops up in the Internet Access Control window where you choose the level of access for the selected program. We want to give Adobe Premier access to the Web, so click 'Permit this application access...' and 'OK'.



6 Define a category

You're now asked to include the program in a category. There are several pre-defined groups that you can add the program too or you can define your own categories. We've opted for the General category. Click 'OK'

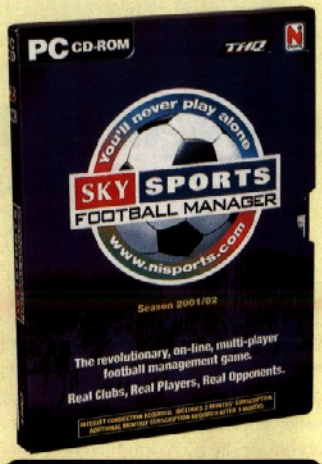


7 In the list

After exiting the Internet Access Control options, you are returned to the main screen. The program appears in the list along with its level of access. You can change the settings of any program by selecting it in the list and clicking 'Modify'.

Sky Sports Football Manager

THINK YOU COULD STEER YOUR TEAM TO GLORY AGAINST OTHER ARMCHAIR FOOTBALL MANAGERS? HERE'S YOU CHANCE TO TRY...



THIS PIECE OF software allows you to step into the shoes of a guy who spends his weekends swearing, wearing donkey jackets, chain-smoking and throwing cups of tea around. No, it's not Tramp Simulator 2002, the program in question is in fact Sky Sports' latest take on the long-established football management genre.

Like previous best-sellers such as Championship Manager, the game lets you take the reins of your favourite football team from the English leagues. It is then up to you to try and steer them to league and cup successes through brokering transfer deals, choosing tactics and putting out a side that'll destroy the opposition.

However, and here comes the twist, SSFM actually lets you pit your managerial wits against real opponents online, with the chance to win real prizes. After choosing your team, you enter one of several concurrent 'worlds' where you can use your tactical expertise and dip into the transfer market before playing games against teams controlled by fellow humans.

A game of two halves

Since the days of Football Director on the Spectrum, we've been hooked on the engrossing world of soccer sims. After all, how else would a tortured Bristol City fan get to taste top flight glory? Imagine then, our delight at finding a game that lets you interact with other players in this way. The in-game chat facility brings a whole new dimension to transfer negotiations, spicing things up quite a bit and giving you scope for accepting all manner of dodgy back-handers and swap-deals.

Graphically, the game is very impressive and the tables, fixtures and team details are so good, you could almost be watching it on Sky Sports. If you're into football in a big way you'll love all the scouting options and stats that are available. However, if it's pure unadulterated action you're after, you may find SSFM slightly lacking. The matches themselves, which take place at a specified time every day, involve about 10 minutes of waiting for a scoreboard to change on screen while trying to read some often lacklustre text commentary. We also found it rather easy to win our matches, regardless of whether or not we logged on every day and fiddled the tactics. If only Graham Taylor had it this good.

The verdict

Sofware: Sky Sports Football Manager
Price: £6.99 per month
Tel: n/a
URL: www.nisports.com

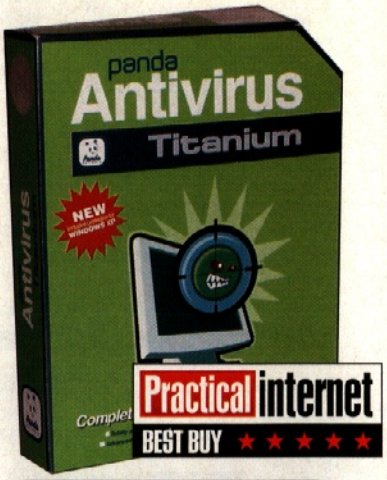
Features:	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★☆☆
Value for money:	★★★★☆
Overall:	★★★★☆

✔ Engrossing new twist on the football manager genre

✖ A bit daunting for non-footie fans

Panda Antivirus Titanium

WIPE AWAY ANY GREASE GRIME THAT FINDS ITS WAY ONTO YOUR PC WITH THIS EXCELLENT ANTIVIRUS UTILITY



IN AN AGE where all sorts of weirdos are getting their dubious kicks by spreading nasty viruses via email and the Web, it's important to make sure you're ready when they come for you.

Panda Software's latest bug-busting release is designed to give you constant protection by scanning the files you use, along with any that come your way via the Net without interfering with your PC enjoyment.

The utility's interface is simple enough for even a mentally-stunted chimp to get to grips with, as you don't need to possess any technical nous in order to start scanning and disinfecting your machine. The navigation of the menus is also mercifully easy thanks to simple buttons, and there are two different interface modes, for beginners and for more advanced users.

The nice thing about Panda's control system is that it lets you easily set up your own scans and configure them by hitting an icon at the top of the screen. For example, you can choose exactly what types of files you want scanned in your emails and set whether you want your incoming and outgoing mail put through the mill. You can even decide what types of items you want scanned, such as images, audio, video and applications.

A bug's life

We were impressed with the speed at which the software managed to scan for bugs and although you could argue that the virus list isn't as comprehensive as its rivals such as Norton or McAfee, Panda certainly has the capacity to help you keep on top of the latest Net nasties. The software offers daily updates for virus signatures and its one-click Intelligent Update is nice and quick, ensuring that no horrid surprises occur when a new virus is unleashed on the Net.

Once a virus has been detected, Panda offers a number of ways of dealing with the unwanted intruder. This choice includes disinfecting automatically, deleting, moving or, bizarrely, ignoring said virus.

Thankfully, Panda is strongly targeted at the Net user and contains its very own Internet Protection Module which scans incoming data at the Winsock layer. This feature makes sure that all of your downloads are given a full cavity search before allowing them through. What's more, if you've found an infected Web site, you can add it to your list of blocked sites or even block specific ports by entering a port name or IP address. These features combine to make Panda Antivirus one of the most robust Net protection tools we've come across for a while.

The verdict

Sofware: Panda Antivirus Titanium
Price: £19.99
Tel: 0870 444 5640
URL: www.pandasoftware.co.uk

Features:	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★☆
Value for money:	★★★★★
Overall:	★★★★☆

✔ Excellent range of tools for protection from Net viruses

✖ Virus list is not quite as large as Norton or McAfee

bargainHOST.co.uk

BargainHost.co.uk provides low cost UK webhosting and domain name registrations.

BUDGET Account 35Mb only £12.99 pa
BUDGET PRO Account 50Mb only £22.99 pa
Budget Pro hosting includes:
FREE Domain Name or Transfer
UNLIMITED POP3 email accounts
UNLIMITED email forwarding
UNLIMITED auto responders
Frontpage 2000 extensions
PHP4 and MySQL database
Password protected folders
Full CGI-BIN and PERL Support
Pre-installed CGI Scripts
SSI (server side includes)
NEW SSL enables secure site
Control panel
Graphical visitor stats
Logs and usage stats
No adverts or popup banners
24/7 FTP access

from £12.99 per year

No hidden charges

www.bargainhost.co.uk

VideoStudio 6

KEEN TO CREATE YOUR VERY OWN AUDIO-VISUAL MASTERPIECES? LOOK NO FURTHER THAN THIS IMPRESSIVE PACKAGE FROM ULEAD

THE ABILITY TO make movie masterpieces used to be the sole preserve of the very rich or very talented. However, the proliferation of powerful PCs has meant that anyone can dabble in video.

VideoStudio 6 is one of several highly impressive video editing packages currently lining the shelves of your local software store. Fresh from the Ulead stable of thoroughbred multimedia applications, this package combines plug-and-play ease of use with functionality that will satiate all but the most gargantuan of video appetites.

Split into three distinct sections, VideoStudio 6 has been designed to walk you through the whole process. The first section deals with capturing files from a video source. A major prerequisite of any video package is, after all, having video to edit, and VideoStudio more than adequately copes with transferring your videos from device to PC.

As well as the standard features, VideoStudio also houses a handy function to let you capture DVD-ready MPEG video direct from your digital video cam. This means you can save immense amounts of space by omitting the tiresome middleman AVI files from your PC.

Make the movie

Once you've imported the fruits of your filming merits, there are a wealth of features to play around with. With a Premiere-style timeline, you can be as frame perfect as you want to, ensuring that you always remain in control of your latest project. There's even an 'overlay' track, for those 1980s *Top Of The Pops* style picture-in-picture effects.

Simply editing your clips is only a fraction of the story, though. VideoStudio comes with 100 transition effects to boost the progression from scene to scene. And if you think your original footage could do with a bit of a makeover, there are 30 filters. Particularly good is the fact you can now preview your changes in real-time, at full resolution – a refreshing change from the tiny window you're normally presented with.

Once you've sorted your movie out, VideoStudio has a DVD Wizard feature to transform your video into something that can be burned onto a DVD. Classed as 'worry-free authoring' by Ulead, this is indeed a quick and easy way of creating your own customisable menus and scene selection tools.

The verdict

Sofware: VideoStudio 6
Price: £49
Tel: 02203 911 3336
URL: www.ulead.co.uk

Features:	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★½
Value for money:	★★★★½
Overall:	★★★★½

✔ Great range of features for a modest sum of money

✖ You need a DVD burner to get the most out of it

Philips EXP303

WANT MORE FROM YOUR PERSONAL PLAYER, BUT DON'T WANT TO SHELL OUT ON AN MP3 PLAYER? PHILIPS MIGHT JUST HAVE THE ANSWER

Music on the move has come on leaps and bounds since the first chunky Sony Walkman appeared on the scene in the early 1980s. We've seen technologies come and go but, until recently, most mobile music players offered the same limited playback capability. No matter how much you shelled out, you would always find yourself hampered by the fact that CDs only hold 80 minutes of music, while tapes rarely get above 90.

Thankfully, the rise of MP3 now means greater freedom for the travelling listener. Admittedly, the first generation MP3 players proved even more constrictive on anyone keen for a music session than their predecessors, but recent advances have finally put long-term listening pleasure in the hands of average punters.

Part of the Expanium range of players (hence its name), the EXP303 from Philips is one of the latest portable devices capable of playing both standard and MP3 CDs. If you're unaware of the concept of an MP3 CD, it's basically a data CD filled with as many MP3 files you can chuck at it. As long as you encode your sound files at a reasonable bitrate, you should easily be able to cram anything up to 180 tracks onto your common or garden 700Mb CD.

In the right hands...

Useless to a standard CD player, this compilation is gold dust in the hands of the right music kit. And the EXP303 is the right kit for the job. In essence, you're looking at the opportunity to listen to hours and hours of music on one single compact disc. Let's face it, no-one wants to carry umpteen albums with them every time they venture off on a long journey, and this is the perfect solution.

"THE 303 IS ONE OF THE FINEST LOOKING MP3 PLAYERS AROUND"

With such a wide array of music available, the first thing we wanted to see was a simple user interface, with buttons and controls that screamed their function to us. And lo and behold, that's just what the Philips EXP303 packs into its shimmering white/silver body. Operation is a doddle, and will fail to tax all but the most technically challenged of people.

As you might expect of a CD player, most of the button action centres on the standard play and search options. While other CD MP3 players (most notably, the Waitec Havin) feature an array of menus and options, which you have to flick through to perform simple manoeuvres, the EXP303 foregoes all of this in favour of more intuitive operation. The upshot of all this is that you get buttons to instantly move between different albums on the CD – a complete boon for easier track manipulation.

Alas, as Poison sang so tenderly in their 1988 power ballad, every rose has its thorn. This very simplicity of operation means you only get track and album numbers on the sparse LCD. It might not seem like much, but for an MP3 generation weaned on viewing the most detailed of information on the music playing, the lack of even track names will be a major irritation. Having said that, most MP3 players fall into the common trap of overloading you with a ridiculously overcrowded and unnecessary display, so at least the Philips avoids this problem.

Addicted to bass?

Apart from the 'album' buttons, the controls of the EXP303 are barely

distinguishable from those you'd see on a common personal CD player. As well as the aforementioned basic play controls, you also have the Philips standard Dynamic Digital Bass Boost – abbreviated to DBB on the button that turns it on and off. This is, as some of the more enlightened of you might have garnered already, a system to pump up the bass. As is often the case with personal players, this added bass power tends to turn what could otherwise have been weak and insipid tunes into something far more dramatic and resonant.

In practice, the EXP303 works like a dream, with the Electronic Skip Protection system providing a handy 100 seconds worth of jump-free listening with MP3s. Jogging, running for a bus, or just dancing about the room to the latest sounds of S Club 7 will be a painless and smooth experience with this in tow.

The advantage of using MP3 CDs instead of shelling out for a dedicated MP3 player is obvious. For a start, you have almost unlimited access to as many tunes as you can be bothered to burn. More importantly, though, the £120 that this will cost you is buttons compared to the vast amounts you'd have to shell out for a hefty MP3 player.

The only black spot on the horizon is getting your hands on MP3 CDs in the first place. Okay, so it's safe to assume that the majority of new PC users have some kind of writer connected to their system, but anyone with an older system is looking at an extra £80 to enter the CD writing age. And if you really want to start getting picky, you could even complain about the price of blank CDs, but this would be excessively fussy.

Form and function

Primarily, though, we think the EXP303 looks the part. Granted, it won't turn heads like the EXP401 we reviewed in issue 61, but that's for one simple reason. This model deals with normal CDs, and not the dinky 8cm versions as seen in the much smaller EXP401. This means you're looking at a player which needs to be at least as large as a CD, and therefore won't fit in your pocket – unless you've taken to wearing dungarees all the time, in which case having a stylish CD player is the least of your worries. But the sleek white (or maybe silver – it really is difficult to tell) façade makes this one of the finest looking MP3 devices on the market at the moment.

What else do you get?

AS WELL AS the fabulously well-endowed MP3 CD player itself, the EXP303 comes equipped with a full range of added extras to enhance your listening pleasure. It might not be the most revolutionary pack ever assembled with a media player, but it will ensure that you can listen to your MP3s wherever you are, and will save you the hassle and cost of having to buy extras at a later date.

The supplied headphones feature a lively chrome effect, as well as some strange in-the-ear action. We found them off-putting, though, with a propensity to fall out of the ear at the most inopportune times. There's also a handy but horribly unfashionable belt clip for listening on the move, as well as the ubiquitous power supply to save on those batteries for a bit. The in-car connector should please anyone with a desire to, er, listen to MP3s in a car.

Like this? Take a look at these alternatives

Philips EXP401

www.philips.com

Aiming for visual appeal more than anything else, this cutesy MP3 CD player was the first on the scene to deal exclusively with 8cm CDs. Although you can only squeeze around 120Mb onto a CD, the benefits of the 401 lie in its petite size and cool appeal.

Waitec Havin

www.waitec.com

Looking rather like a personal CD player from about ten years ago, the Waitec Havin actually houses a pretty decent LCD which gives you all manner of track information on the MP3 CD you're currently listening to. Watch out though – as the LCD will eat up your batteries like a battery-eating beast.

Thomson Lyra PDP2800

www.thomson-multimedia.com

Despite the incurably uncatchy name, this is actually an accomplished MP3 player with a huge 10Gb drive built in. This equates to something in the region of 3,000 tracks, which should be more than enough for most people.

The verdict

Product: EXP303
Price: £119.99
Tel: 020 8665 6350
URL: www.philips.com

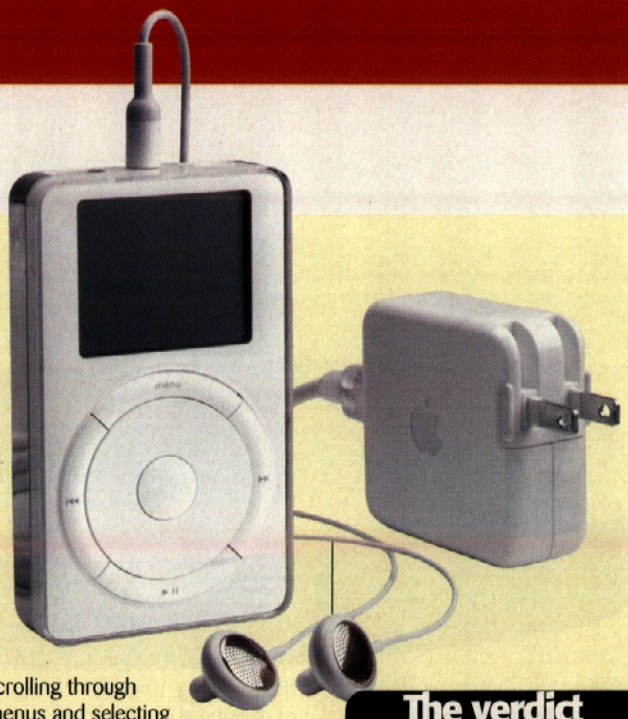
Features:	★★★★☆
Ease of use:	★★★★★
Value for money:	★★★★☆
Overall:	★★★★☆

✔ Stylish, inexpensive and incredibly easy to use

✖ Still relies on unweildy CDs to play your tunes

Apple iPod

IS THE APPLE iPOD THE BEST MUSIC PLAYER AROUND? WE'LL HAVE TO SEE ABOUT THAT



APPLE HAS NOW entered the digital music player market, so long the sole preserve of the PC user. iPod is a portable music player, about the size of a pack of cards, that is based around hard drive technology. It can store a mightily impressive 5Gb of digital music files, which is roughly the equivalent of 1,000 songs, or about 100 CDs of MP3 music.

Stylistically, the player's white and silver casing evokes the iBook's smooth contours – typically Apple. Sadly, the same is also true of the accompanying instruction booklet, which is neither comprehensive enough for beginners nor particularly well constructed.

Sound quality is paramount to the iPod's success, and this is one area where this gadget doesn't compromise. While the reproduction quality is not as impressive as, say, a MiniDisc player, it is, nevertheless, mightily impressive for a digital music player. The headphones, though, are an awkward shape and didn't fit your reviewer's dinky little ears particularly well.

Super speedy

Songs are downloaded onto the iPod via the Firewire cable supplied and works in conjunction with the iTunes 2 software. This is amazingly quick, taking just seconds to transfer 100 MP3 files from iMac to iPod. There's even an option to use the iPod as an external hard drive for data storage purposes.

It does take some time to get used to navigating around the iPod's interface – this is done via a scroll wheel with a central button (for scrolling through menus and selecting options) – but after a couple of hours of fiddling, even the most complex functions soon become second nature.

Overall, the iPod is a mouth-watering 'must have'. It looks great, sounds fantastic and is easily the most sophisticated player of its kind. Poor operating instructions aside, our biggest complaints are that it isn't PC compatible (although third party drivers are certain to emerge) and it's quite simply too expensive.

The verdict

Product: iPod
Price: £349.99
Tel: 0800 039 1010
URL: www.apple.com/uk

Features:	★★★★☆
Ease of use:	★★★☆☆
Value for money:	★★★☆☆
Overall:	★★★★☆

✔ The best player of its kind on the market

✖ Too expensive and not Windows compatible

Sony VAIO PCV-RX1

NEED A CHANGE OF IMAGE? CHECK OUT THIS ULTRA-TRENDY PC FROM SONY AND GIVE YOUR CONNECTIVITY A BOOST

IF THERE'S ONE thing you notice when first clapping eyes on the Sony VAIO, it's that this is no ordinary desktop PC. The stylish design of the tower, keyboard and the ultra-cool speakers make this the sort of computer you'd be proud to show off as a decorative feature in your lounge rather than hidden away in the recesses of your spare room.

Of course, we all know that beauty's only skin (or metal, in this case) deep and this machine is far more than just a pretty accessory to show off your trendy minimalist Ikea shelves and coffee table. In fact, the VAIO has a fairly high level of both speed and power. Its combination of a 1.7GHz P4 processor and 256Mb of RDRAM makes mincemeat out of even the most high-end professional Internet applications and conducts operations quicker than the time it took us to say 'that's quick'. For those like us who love to hoard utter rubbish on their machine, the PCV-RX1 comes with a more than ample 80Gb of hard disk space.

Making the connection

It seems as though Sony has done its homework by making it easy for digital technology junkies to connect themselves up to the wired world through the Vaio. There are two handy USB ports on the front of the machine for hooking up digital cameras, MP3 players and the like. Plus, there's a Memory Stick port for loading up digital content created on Sony devices such as DV camcorders. Which brings us on nicely to the range of digital media utilities that come bundled with the PC. As well as a nicely tucked-away DVD drive and CD-RW for entertaining you with movies and sounds, you also get a healthy range of home entertainment software including DVgate for video capture, Media Bar DVD player, MovieShaker for editing personal movies and SonicStage for grooving along to your digital audio. Of course, Windows XP is supplied as standard along with a healthy range of Adobe's imaging and video editing products.

The kit also comes with a stylish, fully-featured keyboard that boasts several function keys for easy access to your email, the Web and various other useful applications. You can also program the buttons and assign them to various tasks.

On the downside, the package doesn't include a monitor although we tested it with Sony's 15-inch SDM-M51 (worth £399+VAT) which performs admirably and sets the system off a treat.

While this may not be the highest spec PC on the high street, it's good enough for all but the most power-hungry of users and comes at a price that won't upset your bank manager too much.

The verdict

Product: Sony VAIO PCV-RX1
Price: £1,199
Tel: 0207 365 2947
URL: www.vaio.sony-europe.com

Features:	★★★★☆
Ease of use:	★★★★★
Value for money:	★★★★☆
Overall:	★★★★☆

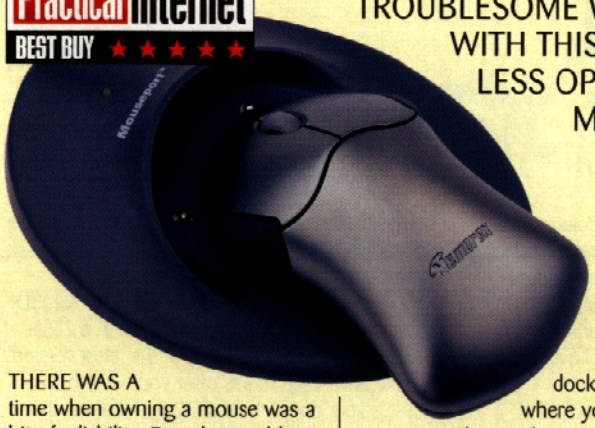
✔ Blessed with good looks and a nice range of connectivity features

✖ Not suited to the more power-hungry PC user

Memorex RF Optical Mouse

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

RID YOURSELF OF TROUBLESOME WIRES WITH THIS TAIL-LESS OPTICAL MOUSE



THERE WAS A time when owning a mouse was a bit of a liability. Extra long cables that get tangled in a web around your whole machine, and sticky balls that leave you picking grit out of them for hours are 'so nineties'. The future of mousing is now upon us – and there's not a ball or a lead in sight.

The Memorex RF Optical Mouse is part of the new breed, combining radio frequency with the latest optical technology in a bid to give you a much smoother ride. The device also comes with a stonking range of five buttons, three of which can be assigned to certain tasks such as launching your Web browser or opening up an email program. One of these buttons also doubles up as an illuminated scroll wheel to add a bit of atmosphere to those late-night surfing sessions.

Button it

On first impressions, the buttons seem a bit flimsy and produce a rather annoying, tacky-sounding click. However, the layout of said buttons is extremely well designed and the positioning makes it feel very natural to press each one with a different finger. In fact, the whole shape of the mouse seems to mould itself perfectly to the contours of your hand and is so comfortable to hold, it almost feels as though it's an extension of your body.

Another nice feature of this device is its MousePort, which is a docking bay where you can house the mouse when not in use. This is used as a power source to fuel the mouse meaning that you never have to stock up on batteries for it, a common problem in many power-hungry optical mice out there.

What's the frequency Kenneth?

The fact that the mouse is driven by radio frequency means that it's very accurate and we didn't notice any lag or sticking, even when dragging it about at a furious pace. What's more, you can change the speed settings to your own preference, allowing you greater control over your mousing activity.

The Memorex RF Optical is a great way to save on desk space, as there are no wires to contend with and you don't even need a mousemat. It also looks relatively inoffensive compared to some of the numerous other ugly ducklings of the mouse world.

The verdict

Product: RF Optical mouse
Price: £39.99
Tel: 0171 6745 098
URL: www.memorexlive.com

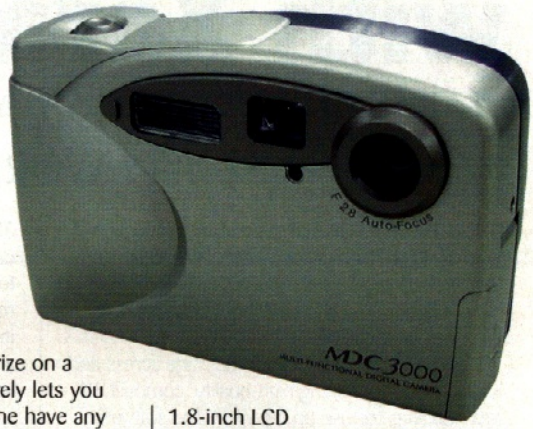
Features:	★★★★☆
Ease of use:	★★★★☆
Value for money:	★★★★★
Overall:	★★★★☆

✔ Ergonomic, reliable mouse that saves valuable desk space

✘ Buttons feel a bit cheap and nasty

Mustek MDC 3000

COMBINING FORM AND FUNCTION, THIS IS AN IDEAL DIGICAM



ANYONE IN THE market for a digital camera may find themselves with a bit of a dilemma. Do you spend big and get a really powerful camera that ends up getting you all tangled up in its multitude of features, or go for a budget number that feels like the third prize on a coconut shy and barely lets you take pictures, let alone have any control over its settings.

Luckily, there is now a growing selection of decent mid-range cameras in the market that are ideal for anyone buying their first digicam. If you're prepared to part with over one hundred pounds of your hard-earned wedge, the Mustek MDC 3000 is a good piece of kit for your first foray into the world of digital photography.

The 3.1 megapixel device comes with three different resolution settings, allowing you to prioritise your 16Mb of space on the free CompactFlash memory card according to the situation. At its highest resolution, we felt the MDC 3000 delivered an excellent picture quality. Images were as sharp as one of Freddy Krueger's talons and were a good match for shots taken on a standard film camera. While the low res setting produces a predictably grainy affair, the snaps are still good enough for sharing with pals via email or on the Web, and is therefore great for rattling off lots of shots at parties or days out.

Roll with it

Like many other digicams these days, the MDC 3000 comes with a video-capture facility that lets you record more than just a snapshot of a moment in reasonably high quality. Plus its 'Burst' option lets you rattle off a whole series of snaps without you having to keep pressing the shutter button.

The control menu itself is sensibly laid out on the camera's 1.8-inch LCD display and allows you to tinker about with elements such as the flash, self-timer and the 2x zoom feature.

The only slight gripe we had with the menu system was the fact that you have to navigate it using an ultra fiddly directional control button on the back of the camera. For anyone with fingernails this is probably fine, but for hand biters like us, trying to toggle a button the size of a small piece of sweetcorn proved cumbersome to say the least.

Despite this minor design glitch, this is a good value-for-money device that offers a range of time-saving features, such as red-eye reduction, automatic white balancing and a choice of shutter speeds between 1/25 and 1/2500 seconds. Whether your weapon of choice is a PC or a Mac, photos from the MDC 3000 are simple to transfer thanks to its USB cable and excellent software utilities. A definite thumbs up.

The verdict

Product: Mustek MDC 3000
Price: TBA – £170 wholesale
Tel: None
URL: www.mustek.com

Features:	★★★★☆
Ease of use:	★★★☆☆
Value for money:	★★★★☆
Overall:	★★★★☆

✔ Good value, feature-packed device with a wide range of options

✘ Not most glamorous camera ever and somewhat clunky to use

CD Contents

Create 3D text headings with Xara3D 2.1

FULLY WORKING PROGRAM! AS SOLD FOR £20

GIVE YOUR SITE'S TEXT A LIFT WITH THIS FULLY WORKING PROGRAM

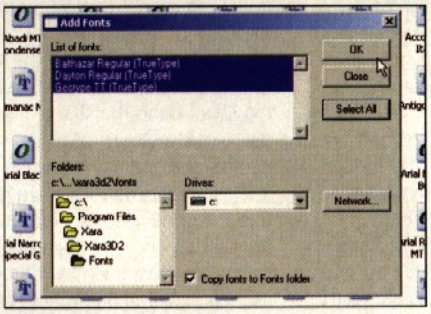
DESPITE BEING ONE of the central elements of a Web site, text headings are often underestimated. Visitors to your site will make a sharp exit if they cannot fathom out what it's about because of its ugly, illegible headings.

Xara3D helps you get your message across and is designed for creating high-quality, compact 3D text headings for use on the Web. The software lets you produce your own 3D heading using any True Type font and then alter aspects such as the 3D extrude length, lighting angle and colour. You can also select any background colour or texture to match your Web page backgrounds and use real-time 3D positioning simply by dragging the image on screen. What's more, you can even animate your text heading, with control over the speed and angle of rotation.

We've also included a 15-day trial version of Xara3D 4 on this month's disc, which contains a host of new features including True soft shadows behind the text, import of 2D objects and a range of interesting new bevel types.

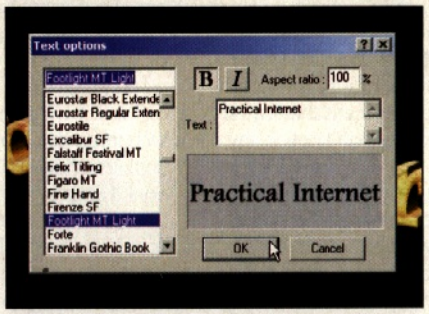
Not only are we giving away a full copy of Xara3D 2.1, but you can also upgrade to Xara3D 4, for the special price of just £20+VAT, a 25% discount on the normal price of the latest version. To take advantage of this offer you need to register your copy of Xara3D2 by following the upgrade link within the program or by visiting **www.xara.com/xd3d2offer.asp?p=paragon**.

Enter heading heaven with Xara3D



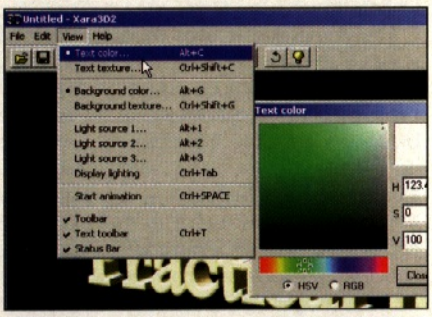
1 Install free fonts

Open the Control Panel from the Start menu and double-click 'Fonts'. Select 'Install New Fonts' from the 'File' menu and locate the fonts on your hard drive where Xara3D was installed.



2 Enter your heading

Run Xara3D. To change the text style to a font of your choice, click the 'T' icon. Select a font from the drop-down list and enter your heading in the 'Text' window.

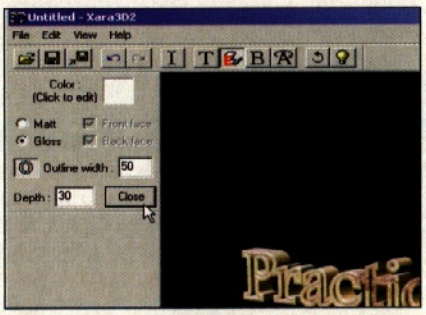


3 Change the colour

Choose 'Text color' from the 'View' menu on the main Xara3D interface. Pick a colour by clicking on the colour palette to experiment with the various shades. Click 'Close' to continue.

4 Choose a texture

You can also use a bitmap texture to colour the text. Select 'Text Texture' from the 'View' menu and choose from one of several different formats in the 'Textures' folder.



5 Change the text surface

Clicking the 'E' in the toolbar can change the surface of the text. Select between a shiny or matt finish, and add an outline. Change the extrusion of the text by altering the 'Depth' field.

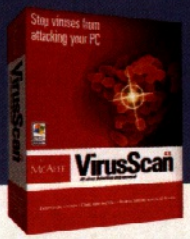
6 Position the text

To alter the background colour, select 'Background color' from the 'View' menu. You can rotate and spin your graphic by clicking and dragging the text or clicking the animation icon.

Try these

→ **Internet Explorer 6 (Freeware)**
Ineternet Explorer 6 boasts an Advanced Search Bar and an Integrated Image Toolbar, making it easy to save, print and email pictures you find online.

→ **Dreamweaver 4 (30-day trial)**
Combining the control of a HTML text editor, the ease of use of a WYSIWYG page layout utility, it's not hard to see why Macromedia Dreamweaver still pushes the buttons of professional Web designers everywhere.



→ **McAfee VirusScan 6.02 (30-day trial)**
It seems like every day there's a new bug threatening to wreak havoc on the Net. This popular virus detection and removal program will crack open a can of whoopass on any email or Web viruses that come your way.

WireFusion 2.0

FULLY WORKING PROGRAM! AS SOLD FOR £369

STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD BY CREATING ADVANCED INTERACTIVE PRESENTATIONS FOR THE WEB

WITH JUST SO much competition for attention on the Web, it's becoming more and more important to make a lasting impression on your site's visitors. WireFusion 2.0 is a great way of getting your message across in an attractive and innovative manner.

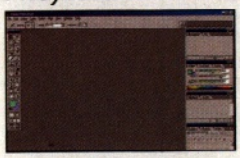
Register your free copy of WireFusion 2.0 at www.demicron.com/practicalinternet, or get a hefty discount on the WireFusion 2.1 upgrade

The program is a drag-and-drop visual programming tool that allows you to create advanced interactive Web presentations in the form of Java applets. What's more, you don't need to know a single line of the Java language thanks to the software's easy to use and intuitive interface. To find out how to make the most of this great utility, check out our guide on pages 92-93.

Included on the CD are Wirefusion 2.0 and the trial of WireFusion 2.1. To get your free serial number for WireFusion 2.0, register at **www.demicron.com/practicalinternet**. To upgrade to the latest version of WireFusion and benefit from our reader offer, saving 50% off the regular price, go to **www.demicron.com/practicalinternet** for further details and to order online.

Action FX Collection

ADD A NEW DIMENSION TO YOUR PHOTOSHOP PROJECTS WITH THIS GREAT COLLECTION OF EFFECTS



If, after checking out our Photoshop Elements tutorial on page 94-99 you find yourself thirsty for more image-editing tomfoolery then look no further than this cracking collection of effects.

This collection of 101 Photoshop actions has been put together by Al Ward, a US Photoshop guru and co-author of Foundation Photoshop 6. The actions are basically miniature 'recordings' of Photoshop commands that allow you to achieve a specific effect. The timesaving actions can be used to apply an effect to an image or text, or even resize it.

Further details are available from **www.actionfx.com**

Hemera Photo Objects Sampler

SPRUCE UP YOUR WEB SITE WITH THIS EXCEPTIONAL COLLECTION OF IMAGES

EVEN THE MOST insightful, entertaining or amusing Web site looks drab without the inclusion of some attractive imagery.

This collection of 100 royalty-free images from Hemera lets you easily add professional quality photography to your Web pages. The simple-to-use image browser makes it easy to thumb through the collection and pictures can be quickly optimised for use on the Web.

If you upgrade to the full version of Photo Objects, you not only get a bumper stack of 50,000 pictures, but you also get PhotoFont Maker, a bonus application that lets you fill your fonts with photo-realistic images and textures. Visit **www.hemera.com** for more info.

Browse offline with WebZip 4.0

IF YOU CONSTANTLY find yourself looking at your watch while you're surfing the Web, fearful of racking up a mammoth phone bill, then you really should do something about it.

Those who don't fancy forking out a monthly fee to get unlimited Net access with an unmetered ISP, should try installing WebZIP. It can help you browse Web sites until the cows come home without worrying about the cost.

The software offers you a way to download, store and view Web pages offline to save money on your phone bill. You can capture complete sites or specify settings for the depth of retrieval, file types and URL filters to customise your site downloads.

1 Enter an address

Install and run WebZIP. Enter the URL of the site to download in the 'Address' bar. Click the 'Profile' drop-down menu and choose what you want to retrieve, then click 'Download'.

2 Downloading pages

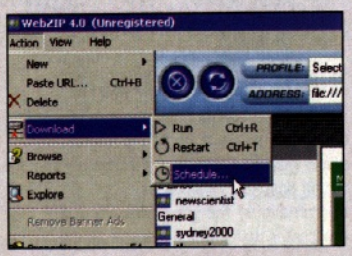
WebZIP will now make contact with the Web page or site that you specified and download the pages, files, or text that you specified. To halt this process, click 'Pause'.

3 View the report

To check the status of your downloaded pages, click the 'Current Task' button. To open any of the pages, simply double-click on its name in the 'Pages' section.

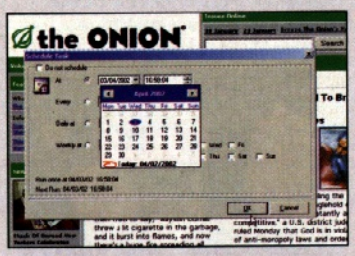
4 Browse offline

Look through the stored Web pages offline by clicking 'Browse'. The 'Home', 'Back'. 'Forward' and 'Refresh' buttons can be found in the top right-hand corner of WebZIP's built-in browser.



5 Scheduling tasks

WebZIP allows you to schedule tasks, so you can keep up with a site that changes its content. To schedule a task, choose 'Download' from the 'Action' menu and click 'Schedule'.



6 Make a date

Untick the 'Do not schedule' box. Choose when you want WebZIP to download the site, or choose a date and time from the drop-down menu. Click 'OK' to confirm. →

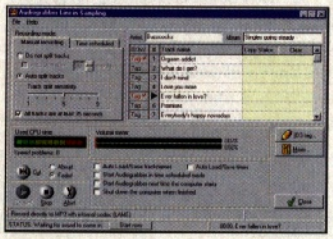
Stimulate your senses

TURN YOUR PC INTO A ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE WITH THESE TOOLS, FOUND IN THE BROWSING SECTION

Winamp 2.78

Shareware, 1.3Mb

This highly rated audio player manages to successfully combine a simple interface with a list of features as long as Stretch Armstrong's arm. The player boasts a playlist editor and a 10-band graphic equalizer with user-definable presets that can automatically load specific music files. Winamp, which can handle audio CDs, MP3 files, and streaming audio broadcasts, includes a fully skinable interface which allows you to customise the look of your player to your heart's content.



Audiograbber 1.80

Freeware, 1.3Mb

With the MP3 phenomenon now as big as Anne Widdecome's pants, it's a good idea to convert your all-time favourites into the music format of the moment.
Audiograbber lets you copy your 'choons' from a CD-ROM drive digitally in order to make a high quality reproduction. The program can be set up to test the quality of its recording and can automatically normalise the music, delete silence from the start and end of tracks and encode straight to MP3 via internal MP3 or Windows Media codecs.

QuickTime 5

Freeware, 3.2Mb

Apple's top notch video technology lets you kick back and relax as you enjoy high-quality video clips or even full-length movies from your PC. New features of the player include QuickTime VR for taking in 360-degree virtual reality scenes plus a skinable interface. The Active Setup file on this month's cover disc will download and install QuickTime directly from Apple's Web site.

Windows Media Player 7.1

Freeware, 9.9Mb

Don't be fooled into thinking that Windows Media Player is your bog standard, everyday audio and video viewer. In fact, the software consists of seven features within one neatly packaged application. As mentioned, you get a digital audio and video player, but also a CD player, media jukebox, media guide and an audio CD burner. So whether you're streaming the latest beats and breaks from the Net or cobbling together a Leonard Cohen compilation CD to cheer up a poorly relative, look no further than this.

RealPlayer 8 Basic

Freeware, 10Mb

One of the stalwarts of the Net media player market, RealPlayer is still going strong despite its numerous reincarnations. The great thing about the program is that it lets you zip straight to the latest news and information on the Web thanks to its one-click destination buttons. The latest version includes over 2,500 radio stations along with full-screen video and a graphic equalizer to tinker around with your video picture.

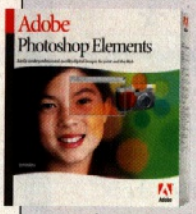
Picture perfect Web graphics

ADD PROFESSIONAL-LOOKING IMAGES TO YOUR SITE USING THESE PRISTINE PROGRAMS

Adobe Photoshop Elements

30-day trial, 51Mb

This budget version of professional's favourite Photoshop lets even the most creatively stunted user produce impressive photo effects in no time flat.

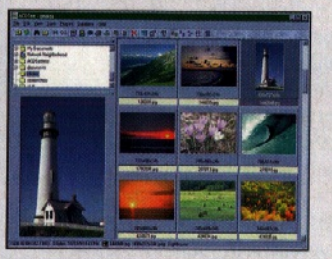


A must for any budding digital photographer, Elements provides a comprehensive range of powerful features to help you enhance, modify and correct problems with pictures such as the oh-so annoying redeye effect, slanted images from scanners, or under or over exposed images. The program's drag-and-drop interface makes it easy to apply various image-altering filters to your photos.

Bannershop GIF Animator 4.5

Shareware, 1.6Mb

Add a dash of animation to your Web pages with this easy-to-use utility. The software lets you design, create and optimise your very own animated GIFs for the Web and can be quickly cobbled together from pre-created images. You can also design your animation directly within the program through the magic of vector graphics, image retouching and antialiased text edit tools. GIF Animator also boasts an optimisation engine that can be used to drastically shrink the size of your files.



ACDSee Classic 2.43

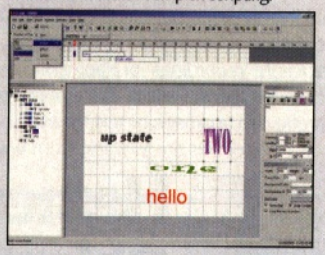
Shareware, 1.6Mb

This mega popular image viewer is perfect for sussing out which pictures you want to use on your Web site. The program lets you view high-resolution digital images in the form of thumbnail pictures. ACDSee works with over 30 different image formats and also comes complete with file conversion capabilities as well as support for cropping and lossless JPEG rotation.

Flash 5

30-day trial, 18.5Mb

Its fair to say there have been some real works of art published on the Web using Flash. Macromedia's mould-breaking application has revolutionised the way people think about Web graphics. Flash is great for creating gorgeous resizable and compact navigation interfaces, games and other dazzling effects for the Web. The software also contains advanced Web animation with exciting transparency and shape blending effects. You can also produce movie clip and button actions to create professional quality interactivity without the use of complex scripting.



SWiSH 2

Shareware, 4.6Mb

If you feel your Flash skills aren't quite up to scratch, or if you don't have the time to build up a full knowledge of the package, here's a program that'll do the business on your behalf. SWiSH lets you add cool animated Flash effects to your site easily and quickly. You can knock up shapes, text, buttons, sprites and motion paths virtually with your eyes closed. The software also lets you preview your animation within SWiSH and features 'live editing' allowing you to make changes while the movie is playing.

On this month's CD

Browsing
- Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.05 *Freeware*
- AudioGrabber 1.80 *Freeware*
- Copernic Shopper *Freeware*
- Download Accelerator 5 *Freeware*
- Eudora 5.1 *Freeware*
- Guard IE Ad Blocking Security Suite *Shareware*
- ICQ 2001b *Freeware. Requires Common Controls update from the Browsing menu*
- IE5 Web accessories *Freeware. Requires Microsoft Internet Explorer*
- Incredimail XE Build 501 *Freeware. Requires Direct X*
- Internet Explorer 5.5 *Freeware*
- Internet Explorer 6 *Freeware. Should only be installed by experienced Internet users*
- Internet Turbo 2001 5.1 *Shareware*
- Morpheus 1.3 *Freeware*
- MSN Messenger 4.6 *Freeware*
- MyJabber 2.0.26 *Freeware*
- NeoPlanet 5.2 *Freeware*
- Net Vampire 3.3 *Freeware*
- Netscape 6.2 *Freeware*
- Opera 6 *Freeware*
- Outlook Express 5 *Freeware*
- QuickTime 5 Active Setup *Freeware. Requires Internet connection for full download*
- RealPlayer 8 Basic *Freeware*
- Shockwave/Flash Player *Freeware*
- Spam Buster 1.9 *Freeware*
- Talk-n-mail 2000 *Freeware*
- WebZIP 4.0 *Shareware*
- Winamp 2.78 *Freeware. Internet Explorer 4 of higher needed for full functionality*
- Window Washer 4.1 *Shareware*
- Windows Media Player 7.1 *Freeware. Requires Windows 98 or higher and Internet Explorer 4.1 or higher*
- WinZip 8.1 *Shareware*
- X Cleaner 1.2 *Freeware*
- Yahoo! Messenger 5.0 *Freeware*
- ZoneAlarm 2.6.231.0 *Freeware*

E-Business
- Comparison Shopper 1 *Freeware*
- Credit Card Verifier 1.3 *Freeware*
- FreeCommerce 1.2 *Freeware*
- Invoice Store 4.0 *Shareware*
- NetShop Lite *Trial*

Features
- Download Accelerator 5 *Freeware*
- Dr Web 4.23 *Freeware*
- GetRight 4.5 *Shareware*
- Go!Zilla 4.1 *Freeware. Windows 95 users require the Common Controls update from the Browsing menu*
- Internet Turbo 2001 5.1 *Shareware*
- McAfee VirusScan 6.02 *30-day trial*
- Net Vampire 3.3 *Freeware*
- NetAnts 1.25 *Freeware*
- Norton AntiVirus 2002 8.0 *30-day trial. Not supported for Windows XP*
- Panda Antivirus Titanium *30-day trial*
- PGPfreeware 7.0.3 *Freeware. Not supported for Windows XP*
- Spam Buster 1.9 *Freeware*
- SpeedNet 5.0 *Freeware*
- Trojans First Aid Kit 5.01 *Freeware*
- Vcatch Virus Catcher *Freeware*
- Window Washer 4.1 *Shareware*
- Windows File Shredder 2.0 *Shareware*

Full Products
- Hemera PhotoObjects Sampler
- WireFusion 2.0 *Follow the CD ROM interface instructions on how to obtain the 'unlock key'*
- Xara 3D 2.1

ISPs
- Tiscali

Site Building
- ACDSee Classic 2.43 *Shareware*
- Adobe PhotoShop Elements *Trial*
- BannerShop GIF Animator 4.5 *Shareware*
- CoffeeCup HTML Editor 9.1 *Shareware*
- CoffeeCup Password Wizard 4 *Shareware*
- Cool Page 2.7 *Freeware*
- Director 8.5.1 Updater
- Dreamweaver 4 *Trial*
- Easy Applet Builder *Shareware*
- Flash 5 *Trial*
- FlashWizard 2.0 *Freeware*
- Gate Keeper 3.2 *Freeware*
- Good Keywords *Freeware*
- HTML Font Colorizer 2.04 *Freeware*
- HTML Kit 1 (Build 290) *Freeware*
- Imagemapic 1 *Freeware. Requires Visual Basic 6*
- IrfanView 3.61 *Freeware*
- Jpeg Cleaner 2.2 *Freeware*
- MiniMapper Plus *Freeware*
- MouseOver Button Wizard 2.2 *Freeware*
- Note Tab Pro 4.85 *Shareware*
- Photoshop Actions from ActionFX *Freeware*
- Promotion Pro 4.6 *Shareware*
- Search Maker Pro 2.1 *Shareware*
- SWiSH 2 *Shareware*
- Traffic Seeker Pro 3.72 *Shareware*
- Website Backgrounds 2.0 *Freeware*
- WireFusion 2.1 *Trial*
- WS-FTP *Shareware*
- Xara 3D 4 *Trial*

System
- Common Controls update
- DirectX 8.1
- Visual Basic 5
- Visual Basic 6

Tutorials
- Adobe PhotoShop Elements *Trial*
- HydraLinks 1.1 *Shareware*
- JoMail *Shareware*
- Photoshop Elements example 1
- Photoshop Elements example 2
- Photoshop Elements example 3
- Pop Up Reaver 1.06 *Freeware*
- Trillian 0.72 *Freeware*
- Web Ferret 4.0 *Freeware*
- Yahoo! Messenger 5.0 *Freeware*

Mac software

Browsing aids
- Aladdin Stuffit Lite
- Interarchy
- Download Deputy Turbo

Browsers
- Microsoft Internet Explorer
- Netscape

Audio Visual
- QuickTime
- SoundApp
- Windows Media Player 7.1

Email
- Eudora 5.1

Chat software
- ICQ 3.0

Net Security
- Cookie Commander

E-Business
- LiveData Lite
- FileMaker Pro
- Ch-ching

Web graphics
- HyperColor Scheme
- PhotoSite TimeSaviour
- Color Picker Pro
- HTML ColorChooser

Site building tools
- BBEdit 6.5
- Freeway
- Dreamweaver 4
- Dreamweaver update
- HTML-Optimizer

How to use this month's free CD

THE MINIMUM RECOMMENDED specification to run the *Practical Internet* CD is 800 X 600 screen resolution, 32Mb RAM, 16 bit colour, Windows 95/98/ME, Intel Pentium or compatible P166. We recommend that all users shut down all other applications while running the CD.

The CD will autorun in Windows 95/98. For users without autorun enabled go to the start menu, select RUN and type d:\PracticalInternet.exe (replacing 'd' with the letter of your CD drive) and press 'Return'.

Damaged discs

We will be please to replace any CD that is cracked, scratched or snapped upon purchase. Return them to the following address: Cover Disc Returns, Paragon Publishing, Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2JS. If you experience technical problems, not due to physical damage on the CD, please DO NOT return any discs to us unless requested by the support team.

Missing discs

If you have purchased the magazine and have not received your CD, we will be happy to send you out a replacement disc. Email **subs@paragon.co.uk** quoting the magazine and issue number, full postal address and daytime phone number.

Problems using the disc

If you encounter problems using the CD or installing the software you can email **cdhelp@paragon.co.uk**. Questions will be answered twice daily.

Please provide us with as much information about the technical specifications of your machine and the software errors you are receiving as well as quoting the magazine and issue number in your email.

Our helpdesk team will be taking calls about disc installation problems on Wednesday afternoons between 2 and 6pm. Phone 01202 200259.

NOTE: This service can only deal with problems when installing software from our CDs. Issues surrounding the use and purchase of software and all ISP queries must be referred to the relevant software publisher, merchant or ISP. Please note that we do not support Windows 3.1/ Windows 95/ Windows NT or Windows 2000 operating systems.

The CD logo

Look out for this logo in the magazine. It tells you which of the programs mentioned in features, or explored in tutorials, are on the *Practical Internet* cover CD-ROM.

ON THE CD

NEW VERSION AOL 7.0

Try AOL's completely FREE* 100 hour Internet trial

AOL IS OFFERING YOU A COMPLETELY FREE* 100 HOUR INTERNET TRIAL WITH NO INTERNET PHONE BILL OR MEMBERSHIP FEE FOR YOUR FIRST MONTH ONLINE. AOL IS A FUN, AFFORDABLE, EASY-TO-USE INTERACTIVE INFORMATION SERVICE COVERING EVERYTHING FROM NEWS AND SPORT TO TRAVEL AND ENTERTAINMENT – TRY AOL TODAY AND SEE WHAT YOU'VE BEEN MISSING

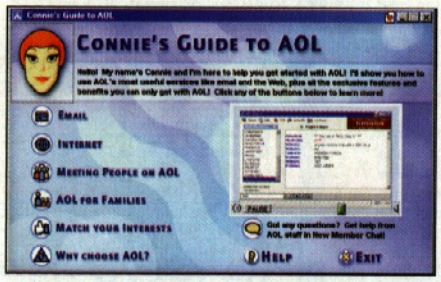
Service provider:	AOL
Free time:	100 hours
Modem speeds:	Up to 56k
Technical support:	0800 376 5432
Dial URL:	www.aol.co.uk
Monthly rate:	£14.99
Platforms:	Windows 95, 98, Millennium Edition, 2000 Professional, XP

AOL version 7.0

When you sign up for your free* trial using your AOL cover CD, you will be using the latest version of software, AOL 7.0. This new software is packed with new and improved features to help you get even more from the world's number one Internet service. For instance, there's a new toolbar that's easier to use, new channels with enhanced content, improved Help to answer all your questions and an improved media player to play your CDs and Videos.

Finding your way around

You can become an AOL expert in just a few minutes by taking a tour with Connie, AOL's Internet genie who'll help you to get the most out of your Internet experience. Connie's new Member guide contains everything you need to know from setting up your email accounts and using the Internet to making the most of the exclusive benefits you only get with AOL.



As well as Connie, AOL has 250 hosts and guides – a team of trained volunteers who offer you help and guidance and enforce rules of decency in chat rooms and on message boards.

Fast communication

Keep in contact with your family, friends and work colleagues with email and Instant Messages. You can set up seven email addresses on your account – each member of the family can enjoy individual email access. AOL lets you send multiple files and even customise emails with personal signatures. As well as being able to personalise emails, AOL allows you to access saved emails easily by filing them by type, date, email address or subject.

And, with our Instant Messages, you can have a one-to-one conversation with your friends in real time. Your personal Buddy List will let you know when friends, family and colleagues are online. You can also set up a customised away message that you can switch on if you are away from your desk or don't want to be disturbed.

Exclusive content

Take a look at our 21 expanded AOL channels and you will find an extensive range of unique content including Sports, Shopping, Financial information and Health. You can find these Channels by clicking on the channel bar at the top left of your screen when you sign on to AOL. It's really that simple. All of these channels combine the best of the World Wide Web with writers, resources and tools commissioned especially by AOL, and all underpinned by our world-famous chat rooms and message boards where you can swap advice and gossip with other people just like you. All in one easy-to-use package.

Parental Controls

You no longer need to worry about what your kids are accessing on the Net, thanks to AOL's Parental Controls. You decide whether you want your kids to see our special areas for Kids Only, Young Teens or Mature Teens or let them see all of the web. You can access the service directly via a prominent icon on the toolbar.

Shop 'til you drop

Shop in the comfort of your own home! AOL has a great selection of online stores to suit everyone - whether you're looking for a treat for yourself or a gift for someone special. If you've never shopped online before don't worry - AOL's First Time Buyers area will take you through the whole process step-by-step.

All the sites on Shop@AOL adhere to strict security and customer service standards. The AOL Promise has been designed to protect all aspects of the Shop@AOL experience. For example, all of the featured shops on Shop@AOL protect your credit card details by encrypting them.

Some of AOL's unique benefits include:

- Flat Rate* Internet Access
- Completely FREE* 100 hour Internet trial
- Exciting new features with AOL Version 7.0
- 7 email addresses
- Instant Messaging
- 21 exclusive channels
- Parental Controls
- Plus 33 million members Worldwide

Plus FREE Member and Technical Help

Whether you have technical problems or have a query with your account we are here for you. Call us on our FREEPHONE Member helpline 7 days a week – **0800 376 5432**

The Internet can be a confusing place so make things easier for yourself – Sign onto AOL by using your cover CD for your free trial today.

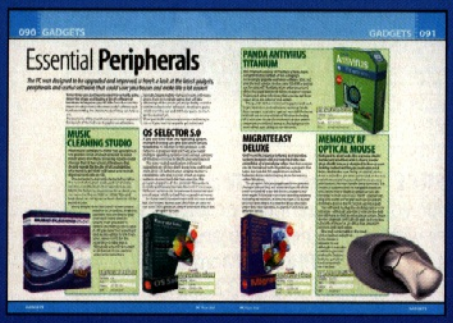
*Your 100 hour FREE trial offer requires credit card details and must be used within your first month online. Subsequent charges apply after your first month online. Offer may vary. Call free on **0800 376 5432** or see online for further information.

PC First Aid™

refresh your PC

IN EVERY ISSUE YOU'LL FIND:

- Windows hints and tips
- Step-by-step tutorials
- How to protect your PC
- Vital tools on the CD-ROM
- Detailed guides to the software
- Great round-up of peripherals



The essential guide to fixing your home computer issue six 7th March

116 PAGES OF PC TROUBLESHOOTING HELP AND ADVICE PLUS A FREE CD-ROM

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Get online with Tiscali

AS MOST PEOPLE KNOW, THE INTERNET IS THE GATEWAY TO A WORLD OF MUSIC, ENTERTAINMENT, NEWS AND INFORMATION AND PROVIDES A VITAL COMMUNICATION MEDIUM – BUT WHICH INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER OFFERS YOU THE BEST VALUE FOR YOUR TIME ONLINE?

Europe's leading ISP

Over three million people in the UK alone have already chosen Tiscali.

Tiscali recently launched in the UK and its determination to provide the very best Internet service to its customers has already established it as Europe's leading Internet service provider. So, what makes Tiscali so popular?

Fast and reliable

For a start, its members enjoy consistently fast and reliable Internet access with industry research having rated Tiscali amongst the fastest service providers.

Great value packages

Tiscali also offers a wide choice of money-saving Internet call packages to suit everyone, regardless of how much or little you use the Internet. These include Tiscali Classic – a no monthly fees package where you just pay local phone rates for the time you are online.

There's also the all-inclusive packages which let you use the Internet at times that suit you for a fixed monthly fee with no additional call charges.

Find what you want – fast

Whichever package you choose to take up, you'll find that Tiscali has been designed to make finding what you want from the Internet as quick and easy as possible. Tiscali has organised its information into fifteen "Channels" such as Entertainment, Motoring, Shopping and Travel - each packed with the latest news, information, offers and links to other relevant Web pages.

You can also get straight to the information you want using the powerful Search feature – and enjoy even greater control with Tiscali's Advanced Search which allows you to filter your options further by date, country, language and more!

Everything you need to communicate!

In the Tiscali Communication Channel you'll find everything you need to communicate over the Internet in one easy-to-use area.

As a member you get five free email addresses and because the email service is

Web-based you can access your email from any Internet connected PC!

Even faster than email, Tiscali's Instant Messenger is the best way to chat online instantly with friends and colleagues over the Internet. Its powerful features let you see at a glance who is online and exchange messages in an instant! You can even send Web page links and attachments to your recipients' desktop, making this a real alternative to email.

Tiscali provides plenty of other ways to communicate over the Net, including discussion forums, chat rooms, even a text messaging service which lets you send up to 10 FREE text messages a day from your PC to any UK mobile phone.

Buyers' guide

A comprehensive resource covering Internet service providers and the very best Net software and hardware. Compare them all at a glance...

Using this guide

BUYING NEW HARDWARE and software for your PC or Mac can be a tricky task. You often have to choose between products which cost the same price and seem to offer identical features. What's more, high street shops encourage you to spend a little more on buying higher spec products than you really need.

This is why *Practical Internet*'s Buyers' Guide is so useful. It's been written with everyday Net users like you in mind and only includes the products and services which we think are genuinely worth buying.

Buy with confidence

The information here is updated every month, but please note that prices and features do sometimes change before we can amend them on these pages – so it's best to check with the supplier before buying.

Look out for our cherished Best Buy logo (below) which is only awarded to the best quality products around.

Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

Which ISP?

With thousands of ISPs all offering great-looking deals, it's tough to find the right service. This guide helps decide which is best for you

UNMETERED INTERNET PROVIDERS

NEVER SPEND MONEY ON YOUR INTERNET PHONE CALLS AGAIN WITH THESE UNMETERED ISPS. (COSTS ARE MONTHLY)

NAME AND URL	COST	FRIACO	BT LINE REQUIRED	UNMETERED AVAILABILITY	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS
0800Dial Business Class http://www.0800dial.com	£21.14	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	10	Premium - 50p
0800Dial Home User http://www.0800dial.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	10	Premium - 50p
0800onlineserve http://www.0800.onlineserve.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	10	Free
123ISP http://www.123isp.co.uk	£13.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	7	10	National Rate
24-7Freecall http://www.24-7freecall.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	7	10	National Rate
4theNet Unlimited http://www.4thenet.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	10	Premium - 50p
Abel DIAL Leisuretime http://www.abel.co.uk	£11.99	Unknown	Unknown	General Off-Peak	999	50	Premium - 25p
Affinity http://www.affinityuk.com/surftime.htm	£25.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	15	10	Premium - 50p
AOL http://www.aol.co.uk	£14.99	No	No	24 Hours	7	14	Free
Asian Biz BusinessTime http://www.asian-biz.net	£11.99	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	15	10	Premium - 50p
Asian Biz HomeTime http://www.asian-biz.net	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	10	Premium - 50p
Asian Biz SurfTime Evenings & Weekends http://www.asian-biz.net	£9.99	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	15	10	National Rate
Black Britain - Surf Business Unlimited http://www.blackbritain.co.uk	£11.75	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	15	10	Premium - 50p
Black Britain - Surf Unlimited Gold http://www.blackbritain.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	10	Premium - 50p
BlueCarrots Unlimited http://www.bluecarrots.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	10	Premium - 50p
blueyonder SurfUnlimited http://www.blueyonder.co.uk	£10.00	No	No	24 Hours	15	30	Free
Breathe At Home http://www.breathe.com	£8.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	5	10	Premium - 50p
BT Connect http://www.btclickforbusiness.com	£31.74	No	Yes	24 Hours	20	20	Local Rate

Seven steps to pick your ideal Internet service provider

1 Choose your ISP type

UNMETERED ISPS make a monthly subscription charge, but you are not billed for any Net phone charges.

FREE ISPS don't charge monthly subscription rates, but you pay local phone rates when online.

PAY ISPS make a monthly subscription charge. You also pay local phone rates when online. They are generally faster and more reliable, though.

2 Is FRIACO for me?

FRIACO (or Flat Rate Internet Access Call Origination) is a form of wholesale Net access that costs ISPs 60-80% less than before. FRIACO ISPs are usually more financially stable and reliable than their troubled freephone predecessors.

3 Getting speedy help

If you're new to the Internet, you will make lots of calls to the ISP's telephone helpline – so pick one with low-cost support.

4 Enjoy Net gaming?

If you're a keen online game player, a dedicated fast service provider is absolutely essential. GamesWorld (**www.games-world.net**) is one of several services that supports Quake, for example.

5 No Windows? No probs!

Freeserve, BT Click and Demon work well with Linux, while Mac users should consider Madasafish, Demon, AOL or AbelGratis.

6 Building a Web site?

If you want to build a Web site, check an ISP offers free Web space. Some provide unlimited space (though 10Mb should be ample) while others offer free domain names.

7 Get global email

If your Internet service provider offers a Webmail service you'll be able to access your email from anywhere in the world through a Web browser. This is handy for travellers and business people. Having said that, many travellers get by with a third-party Web mail service like Hotmail, as this also lets you send and receive email via any Net-connected computer around the world.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH www.net4nowt.com Net 4 Nowt

NAME AND URL	COST	FRIACO	BT LINE REQUIRED	UNMETERED AVAILABILITY	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS
BT Connect Lite http://www.btclickforbusiness.com	£10.69	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	20	20	Premium - 50p
BTopenworld Anytime http://www.btopenworld.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	10	50	Premium - 50p
BTopenworld for BT Surf http://www.btopenworld.com	£11.98	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	5	10	Premium - 50p
Chalkface Business Unlimited http://www.chalkface.net	£12.91	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	15	10	Premium - 50p
CharityDAYS Donate Surf Lite http://www.charitydays.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	250	Local Rate
CharityDAYS Donate Surf Standard http://www.charitydays.net	£16.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	250	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime 12 http://www.clara.net	£4.99	Yes	Yes	General Off-Peak	999	50	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime 35 http://www.clara.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	General Off-Peak	999	50	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime AnyTime http://www.clara.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	50	Local Rate
ClaraNET FreeTime Unlimited http://www.clara.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	18:00 - 02:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	999	50	Local Rate
Cloud Nine BusinessSurf Economy http://www2.cloud-nine.com	£24.68	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	100	Premium - 75p
Cloud Nine HomeSurf Economy http://www2.cloud-nine.com	£15.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	0	Premium - 75p
Cloud Nine HomeSurf Professional Economy http://www2.cloud-nine.com	£18.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	50	Premium - 75p
Demon Premier Connect Plus http://www.demon.net	£39.98	No	Yes	24 Hours	999	20	Local Rate
Do-Do.tv http://www.do-doisp.com	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	7	10	National Rate
Eclipse Internet http://www.eclipse.net.uk	£5.99	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	5	10	Standard BT
Eclipse Internet http://www.eclipse.net.uk	£19.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	5	10	Standard BT
EcosseTel B-Com Xtra http://www.ecossetel.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	50	Premium - 75p
EcosseTel Vroom 2 - Off-peak http://www.ecossetel.net	£0.00	Yes	Yes	General Off-Peak	999	0	Premium - 75p
EcosseTel Vroom2 http://www.ecossetel.net	£0.00	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	0	Premium - 75p
Fast24 Daytime http://www.fast24.co.uk	£10.75	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	20	10	Premium - 50p
Fast24 Off Peak http://www.fast24.co.uk	£5.83	Yes	Yes	General Off-Peak	20	10	Premium - 50p
Fasthosts FreeCall Home http://dial.fasthosts.co.uk	£17.61	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	200	Standard BT
Firenet Anytime Plus http://www.firenet.uk.net	£13.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	10	Premium - 50p
Free24-7 http://www.free24-7.net	£7.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	0	0	National Rate
Freechariot FC Business Unlimited http://www.freechariot.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	06:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	15	10	Premium - 50p
Freechariot FC Universal 24/7 http://www.freechariot.co.uk	£16.49	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	10	Premium - 50p
Freechariot FC Unlimited http://www.freechariot.co.uk	£13.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	10	Premium - 50p
Freedom2Surf Anytime http://www.freedom2surf.net	£11.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	20	Standard BT
Freedom2Surf Unlimited http://www.freedom2surf.net	£15.39	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	999	25	Standard BT
Free-Online Connect Always On http://www.free-online.co.uk	£99.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	250	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect BizLite http://www.free-online.co.uk	£19.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	500	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Lite http://www.free-online.co.uk	£6.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	250	Local Rate
Free-Online Connect Standard http://www.free-online.co.uk	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	250	Local Rate
Freeserve Anytime http://www.freeserve.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	15	Premium - 50p
Freeserve HomeTime http://www.freeserve.com	£10.99	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	999	15	Premium - 50p
intY http://www.inty.net	£32.91	No	Yes	24 Hours	999	5	National Rate
ItsGoodToGive http://www.itsgoodtogive.co.uk	£11.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	5	5	Premium - 60p
Jings http://www.jings.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	1	10	National Rate
KeMe.com - Standard http://www.keme.com	£14.95	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	50	National Rate
KeMe.com - Supreme http://www.keme.com	£29.95	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	50	National Rate
KeMe.com - Unlimited http://www.keme.com	£44.95	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	50	National Rate
LineOne AnyTime http://www.lineone.net	£14.99	Unknown	Yes	24 Hours	5	50	Premium - 50p
LineOne SurfTime http://www.lineone.net	£9.99	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	5	50	Premium - 50p
Madasafish http://www.madasafish.com	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	1	10	Premium - 25p
Metro800 Business Gold http://www.metronet.co.uk	£18.79	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	10	Premium - 50p
Metro800 Business Unlimited http://www.metronet.co.uk	£12.91	Yes	Yes	06:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	15	10	Premium - 50p
NildramSurftime http://www.getsurftime.co.uk	£17.74	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	999	25	Standard BT

TOP BUYS

Web site builders

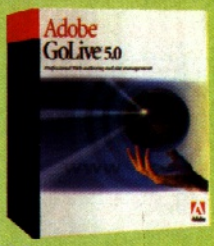
Dreamweaver 4

Practical Internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

£299+VAT
www.macromedia.com
What's good? Arguably the most solid Web authoring package
What's bad? The price. More than £300 for a copy is likely to deter all but the most serious amateur Web builders
Telephone: 0800 8358 5857
Verdict: ★★★★★

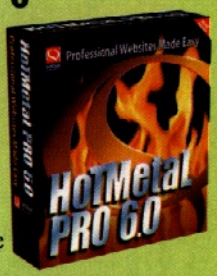
Adobe GoLive 5

£229
www.adobe.com
What's good? Vastly impressive range of features. Easy to pick up and use from the box.
What's bad? Not cheap. Still unlikely to win over Dreamweaver die-hards
Telephone: 020 8606 4000
Verdict: ★★★★



HoTMetaL Pro 6

£79
www.hotmetalpro.com
What's good? Inexpensive program with expensive-looking features
What's bad? The integration of HTML coding might bamboozle beginners
Telephone: 020 8387 4110
Verdict: ★★★★



Flash 5

Practical Internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

£299+VAT
www.macromedia.com
What's good? Allows you to create stunning interactive animations. Great for beginners and experts alike
What's bad? Can be somewhat fiddly at first
Telephone: 0800 8358 5857
Verdict: ★★★★★

Buyers' guide

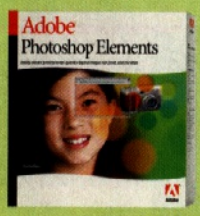
Which ISP?

TOP BUYS

Web image editors

Photo Impact 7

£89.00
www.ulead.co.uk
What's good? Extremely comprehensive graphics package for the price
What's bad? It's not Photoshop
Email: info@ulead.de
Verdict: ★★★★★



Adobe Photoshop Elements

£79
www.adobe.com
What's good? The greatest graphics program on the go. Cheap too!
What's bad? This is an excellent all-round package suitable for all levels of PC user, but it lacks professional publishing tools
Telephone: 020 8606 4000
Verdict: ★★★★★

Fireworks 4

£139
www.macromedia.com
What's good? Very tasty at helping you make animated GIFs for menus and general Web design
What's bad? It's a tad pricey and overpowering for the beginner
Telephone: 020 8358 5857
Verdict: ★★★★

JASC Paint Shop Pro 7 AE

£79+VAT
www.digitalworkshop.co.uk
What's good? Cheap, intuitive and easy to use. A dream for those new to the world of graphics
What's bad? Doesn't offer the same depth of features as Adobe's Photoshop
Telephone: 01295 258335
Verdict: ★★★★★

NAME AND URL	COST	FRIACO	BT LINE REQUIRED	UNMETERED AVAILABILITY	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS
NildramSurftimePlus http://www.getsurftime.co.uk	£43.49	No	Yes	24 Hours	999	25	Standard BT
nStream http://www.nstream.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	5	25	Standard BT
ntlworld http://www.ntlworld.com	£0.00	No	No	24 Hours	5	10	Premium - £1.00
OneTel http://www.onetel.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	3	10	Premium - 50p
Pipex DialTime Combined 24/7 http://www.dial.pipex.com	£81.96	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	12	50	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Combined 24/7 128K http://www.dial.pipex.com	£152.46	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	12	50	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Dedicated 1:1 24/7 http://www.dial.pipex.com	£117.21	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	12	50	national Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared 3:1 http://www.dial.pipex.com	£46.71	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	12	50	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared 3:1 128K http://www.dial.pipex.com	£81.96	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	12	50	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared 5:1 http://www.dial.pipex.com	£34.96	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	12	50	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared 5:1 128K http://www.dial.pipex.com	£58.46	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	12	50	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared Evening & w/e http://www.dial.pipex.com	£23.21	Yes	Yes	General Off-Peak	12	50	National Rate
Pipex DialTime Shared Evening & w/e 128K http://www.dial.pipex.com	£34.96	Yes	Yes	General Off-Peak	12	50	National Rate
PlusNet Connect Always On http://www.plus.net	£99.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	250	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Biz http://www.plus.net	£39.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	500	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Biz Always On http://www.plus.net	£119.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	500	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Biz Lite http://www.plus.net	£19.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	500	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Heavy User http://www.plus.net	£29.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	250	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Lite User http://www.plus.net	£6.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	250	Local Rate
PlusNet Connect Standard http://www.plus.net	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	250	Local Rate
Powergen Anytime http://www.pgen.net	£13.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	5	10	National Rate
Powergen Daytime http://www.pgen.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	06:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	5	10	National Rate
Powergen Evenings & Weekends http://www.pgen.net	£9.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	5	10	National Rate
Silvermead Business Unlimited http://www.silvermead.net	£12.91	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	15	10	Premium - 50p
Silvermead Internet Unlimited http://www.silvermead.net	£13.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	10	Premium - 50p
SniffOut DreamTime http://www.sniffout.net	£19.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	999	Local Rate
SniffOut PeakTime http://www.sniffout.net	£11.99	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	999	999	Local Rate
SniffOut SmartTime http://www.sniffout.net	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	999	Premium - 50p
SniffOut TimeOut http://www.sniffout.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	999	999	Premium - 50p
Sonnet Internet Solo 24/7 http://www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£29.38	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	50	Local Rate
Sonnet Internet Solo Daytime http://www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£17.63	Yes	Yes	06:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	999	50	Local Rate
Sonnet Internet SoloLite 24/7 http://www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£17.63	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	25	Local Rate
Sonnet Internet SoloLite Daytime http://www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£11.75	Yes	Yes	06:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	999	25	Local Rate
Sonnet Internet Symphony http://www.sonnetinternet.co.uk	£64.63	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	100	Local Rate
SupaNet Supahighway http://www.supahighway.com	£14.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	999	20	Premium - 50p
SurfAnytime Business Unlimited One http://www.surfanytime.co.uk	£11.75	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Saturday	15	10	Premium - 50p
SurfAnytime Gold http://www.surfanytime.co.uk	£15.49	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	10	Premium - 50p
SurfAnytime HomeTime http://www.surfanytime.co.uk	£4.99	Yes	Yes	12:00 - 17:00	15	10	Premium - 50p
SurfAnytime OffPeak http://www.surfanytime.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	15	10	Premium - 50p
SurfAnytime Silver http://www.surfanytime.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	10	Premium - 50p
SurfingRabbit http://www.surfingrabbit.com	£19.99	Unknown	Yes	24 Hours	5	10	National Rate
Tiny T:Surf Value http://www.tinyonline.net	£8.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	5	15	Premium - 50p
TinyT:SurfPlus http://www.tinyonline.net/tsurf	£14.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	5	15	Premium - 50p
Tiscali Anytime http://www.tiscali.co.uk	£14.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	999	50	Premium - 50p
Tiscali Daytime http://www.tiscali.co.uk	£9.99	No	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	999	50	Premium - 50p
Tiscali Offpeak http://www.tiscali.co.uk	£9.99	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	999	50	Premium - 50p
TotalServe Ultimate Express http://www.totalserve.co.uk	£2.34	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	999	Premium - 50p
TotalServe UltimateSurf 24/7 http://www.totalserve.co.uk	£12.97	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	999	Premium - 50p

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
www.net4nowt.com
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NAME AND URL	COST	FRIACO	BT LINE REQUIRED	UNMETERED AVAILABILITY	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS
TotalServe UltimateSurf Day (multi) http://www.totalserve.co.uk	£35.24	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	999	999	Premium - 50p
TotalServe UltimateSurf Day (single) http://www.totalserve.co.uk	£29.37	Yes	Yes	08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday	999	999	Premium - 50p
Totalserve UltimateSurf Lite http://www.totalserve.co.uk	£8.22	Yes	Yes	General Off-Peak	999	999	Premium - 50p
UKStamp Business http://www.ukstamp.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	999	Standard BT
UKStamp Residential http://www.ukstamp.co.uk	£8.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	0	N/A
V21 http://www.v21.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	999	Premium - £1.00
Virgin.net 24seven http://www.virgin.net	£15.00	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	5	10	Premium - £1.00
Vispa Connect Anytime http://www.vispaconnect.co.uk	£14.95	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	15	Local Rate
Vispa Connect Hometime Lite http://www.vispaconnect.co.uk	£12.98	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	999	15	Local Rate
Vispa Connect Hometime Plus http://www.vispaconnect.co.uk	£34.98	No	Yes	General Off-Peak	999	15	Local Rate
Vizzavi http://www.vizzavi.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	999	0	Premium - 50p
WHSmithnet Flat Rate http://www.whsmith.co.uk	£12.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	15	10	Premium - 50p
WHSmithnet Off Peak http://www.whsmith.co.uk	£9.99	Yes	Yes	16:00 - 08:00 Monday to Friday + all w/e	15	10	Premium - 50p
Wonkypig http://www.wonkypig.com	£16.99	Yes	Yes	24 Hours	5	5	Premium
Wonkypig 0800 http://www.wonkypig.com	£19.99	No	No	24 Hours	5	5	Premium
Zetnet 24/7 http://www.zetnet.co.uk	£29.99	No	Yes	24 Hours	999	25	National Rate
Zoom http://www.zoom.co.uk	£0.00	No	No	24 Hours	999	20	Premium - 25p

BROADBAND AND ADSL SERVICES

GET SUPER-FAST, ALWAYS-ON NET ACCESS FROM THESE BROADBAND SERVICE PROVIDERS. COSTS SHOWN ARE MONTHLY

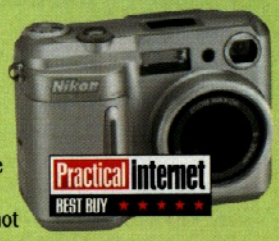
NAME AND URL	TYPE OF ACCESS	INSTALL FEE	COST	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWSGROUPS
Abel Always USB http://www.ablealways.co.uk	ADSL	£49.94	£88.13	999	50	Yes
Alcom Internix (business) 1Mbps http://www.adsl-internet-access.co.uk	ADSL	£146.82	£260.00	0	0	No
Andrews & Arnold (consumer) 512Kbps http://www.aa.nu	ADSL	£76.38	£235.00	999	999	Yes
AppleOnline (business) 0512Kbps http://www.appleonline.net	ADSL	£155.00	£260.00	999	25	Yes
Atlantic Telecom (business) 0512Kbps http://www.atlantic-telecom.com	ADSL	£116.33	£305.50	999	80	Yes
Beyond Access http://www.beyondaccess.co.uk	ADSL	£0.00	£305.50	999	100	Yes
BTopenworld business500 http://www.btopenworld.com	ADSL	£46.87	£88.13	10	20	Yes
ClaraDSL Solo http://www.clara.net	ADSL	£49.99	£176.25	999	50	Yes
Colt (business) 0513Kbps http://www.oncolt.com	ADSL	£149.23	£305.50	999	10	Yes
Demon Express Pro http://www.demon.net	ADSL	£205.63	£293.75	999	20	Yes
Easynet (business) 0512Kbps http://www.uk.easynet.net	ADSL	£92.83	£323.13	10	0	Unknown
Eclipse Internet (consumer) http://www.eclipse.net.uk	ADSL	£57.58	£176.25	5	10	Yes
edNET (business) http://www.ednet.co.uk	ADSL	£117.50	£305.50	999	25	Yes
Freedom2Surf (consumer) http://www.freedom2surf.net	ADSL	£39.99	£179.99	999	25	Yes
Free-Online ADSL Business 1000 http://www.free-online.co.uk	ADSL	£141.00	£305.50	999	500	Yes
HomeChoice (consumer) http://www.homechoice.co.uk	ADSL	£19.99	£40.00	999	20	Yes
Iomart CopperSurf SOHO 500 http://www.iomartadsl.com	ADSL	£111.63	£117.50	999	25	Yes
Jings 500U 24 http://www.jings.com	ADSL	£55.95	£0.00	999	25	Yes
Jings 500U PLUS http://www.jings.com	ADSL	£59.99	£180.00	999	25	Yes
Knowall (consumer) http://www.knowall-it.co.uk	ADSL	£58.75	£199.75	0	0	No
Lavron (business) 0512Kbps http://www.lavron.net	ADSL	£176.25	£352.50	0	0	No
Madasafish Dazzle 500U 24 http://www.madasafish.com	ADSL	£55.95	£0.00	999	25	Yes
MetroNet (consumer) http://www.metronet.co.uk	ADSL	£58.74	£176.25	5	20	Yes
Mistral (business) 0512Kbps http://www.mistral.co.uk	ADSL	£0.00	£305.50	999	100	Yes
Netscalibur (business) 2Mbps http://www.netscalibur.co.uk	ADSL	£246.75	£323.13	999	20	Yes
NewNet (business) 0512Kbps http://www.newnet.co.uk	ADSL	£129.25	£305.50	999	100	Yes
NewNet (business) 1Mbps http://www.newnet.co.uk	ADSL	£188.00	£305.50	999	100	Yes

TOP BUYS

Digital cameras

Nikon Coolpix 880

£680
www.nikon.co.uk



What's good? Impressive 3.34 megapixel count. Loads of features. Compact and nice to handle
What's bad? It's not that cheap
Telephone: 0800 230 220
Verdict: ★★★★★

Canon Digital Ixus

£439
www.canon.co.uk

What's good? Small and stylish. Good zoom lens. Excellent image quality
What's bad? Could get lost quite easily
Telephone: 0121 6808062
Verdict: ★★★★

Kodak DX3900

£449
www.kodak.co.uk

What's good? Sits in a handy docking station, making picture transfer a doddle. Menu system is excellent
What's bad? A bit too simplistic and restricted for the money
Telephone: 0870 243 0270
Verdict: ★★★★

Pentax Optio 330

£499
www.pentax.co.uk

What's good? Excellent features and options. Compact and cheap at the price
What's bad? Its bulk can be bothersome.
Telephone: 01753 792792
Verdict: ★★★★★

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Buyers' guide

Which ISP?

TOP BUYS

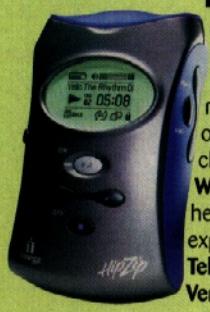
MP3 Players

Practical Internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

Sonic Blue Rio600

£170
www.diamondmm.co.uk
What's good? Several playback modes. Vibrant and pacy sound. Expandable up to 340Mb
What's bad? Only 32Mb memory as standard
Telephone: 01189 444400
Verdict: ★★★★★

Iomega HipZip



£290
www.iomega-europe.com
What's good? Uses removable media instead of flash memory, which is cheaper
What's bad? Bulkier and heavier than the Rio, also expensive
Telephone: 020 7365 9527
Verdict: ★★★★

Smart MP3 Player

£124
www.jedan.co.uk
What's good? Plays both normal and MP3 CDs. Decent sound quality
What's bad? Very odd interface. Not compatible with WMA or supplied with encoding software
Telephone: 020 8668 0016
Verdict: ★★★★

Samsung Yepp YP-NEU

£230
www.yepparty.com
What's good? Looks rather beautiful. Comes supplied with 64Mb of memory
What's bad? Poor sound. Sparse in terms of features. Limited information on the LCD display.
Telephone: 0800 521652
Verdict: ★★★★

NAME AND URL	TYPE OF ACCESS	INSTALL FEE	COST	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWSGROUPS
NewNet (business) 2Mbps http://www.newnet.co.uk	ADSL	£282.00	£305.50	999	100	Yes
Nildram (business) 0512Kbps http://www.getadsl.co.uk	ADSL	£116.33	£305.50	999	10	Yes
Nildram (business) 1Mbps http://www.getadsl.co.uk	ADSL	£152.75	£305.50	999	10	Yes
Nildram (consumer) http://www.getadsl.co.uk	ADSL	£49.94	£176.25	999	10	Yes
NTL http://www.ntl.co.uk	Cable	£24.99	£25.00	5	10	Yes
Onyx Internet (business) 0512Kbps http://www.onyx.net	ADSL	£117.50	£352.50	999	25	Yes
Pipemedia Online (business) 2Mbps http://www.adsl.uk.net	ADSL	£258.50	£235.00	999	50	Yes
Pipex Home Professional http://www.dsl.pipex.net	ADSL	£52.86	£188.00	12	50	Yes
PlusNet ADSL 1000 http://www.plus.net	ADSL	£141.00	£305.50	999	500	Yes
PlusNet ADSL Professional http://www.plus.net	ADSL	£88.13	£305.50	999	250	Yes
Quik Internet (business) 2Mbps http://www.quikinternet.co.uk	ADSL	£203.28	£305.50	10	0	Yes
Quik Internet (business) 0512Kbps http://www.quikinternet.co.uk	ADSL	£149.23	£305.50	10	0	Yes
Quik Internet (business) 1Mbps http://www.quikinternet.co.uk	ADSL	£176.25	£305.50	10	0	Yes
Skystorm http://www.skystorm.net	Satellite	£17.63	£0.00	0	0	No
Starspeeder http://www.starspeeder.co.uk	Satellite	£17.63	£0.00	0	0	No
Supanet - 0512Kbps http://www.supanet.com	ADSL	£115.15	£305.50	999	20	Yes
SurfAnytime (consumer) http://www.surfanytime.co.uk	ADSL	£117.49	£305.50	15	10	Yes
Timeward (business) 1Mbps http://www.timewarp.com	ADSL	£176.25	£352.50	999	50	Yes
Tiscali (consumer) http://www.tiscali.co.uk	ADSL	£39.99	£150.00	999	50	Yes
Vispa (business) 0512Kbps http://www.vispaconnect.co.uk	ADSL	£110.45	£336.05	999	15	Yes
Vispa (business) 1Mbps http://www.vispaconnect.co.uk	ADSL	£150.40	£336.05	999	15	Yes
Vispa (business) 2Mbps http://www.vispaconnect.co.uk	ADSL	£178.60	£336.05	999	15	Yes
Vispa (consumer) http://www.vispaconnect.co.uk	ADSL	£45.00	£150.00	999	15	Yes
Xantic http://www.xanticbroadband.com	Satellite	£25.00	£0.00	0	0	Unknown
Zen (business) 1Mbps http://www.zenadsl.com	ADSL	£170.38	£305.50	5	50	Yes
Zen (business) 2Mbps http://www.zenadsl.com	ADSL	£217.38	£305.50	5	50	Yes
Zen (business) 512Kbps http://www.zenadsl.com	ADSL	£123.38	£305.50	5	50	Yes
Zen (consumer) 512Kbps http://www.zenadsl.com	ADSL	£52.88	£88.13	5	50	Yes
ZeNOC GamesStream 512 http://www.zenoc.net	ADSL	£55.00	£100.00	5	20	Yes
ZeNOC ProfessionalStream 1024 http://www.zenoc.net	ADSL	£170.00	£300.00	5	20	Yes

PAY ISPs

WANT TO PAY FOR YOUR SERVICE PROVIDER AND BE ASSURED OF TOP QUALITY ACCESS? HERE ARE SOME OF THE BEST...

ISP NAME AND URL	COST PER MONTH	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE Mb	SUPPORT COSTS	V 90	128K ISDN
Cablenet http://www.cablenet.net	£4.95	999	50	Standard BT	Yes	No
CharityDAYS Donate Extra http://www.charitydays.net	£4.99	999	250	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
CIX http://www.cix.co.uk	£6.25	999	5	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
CompuServe http://www.compuserve.co.uk	£7.50	7	10	National Rate	Yes	No
Demon http://www.demon.net	£11.75	999	20	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Direct Connection http://www.dircon.net	£4.70	999	20	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Easynet http://www.easynet.co.uk	£11.99	999	999	Local Rate	Yes	No
Entanet Pro 200 Lite http://www.enta.net	£19.58	999	25	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Free-Online Lite http://www.free-online.co.uk	£4.99	999	250	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Nildram http://www.nildram.net	£5.88	999	25	Standard BT	Yes	No
PipexDial http://www.dial.pipex.com	£15.00	12	50	National Rate	Yes	Yes
PlusNet Lite http://www.plus.net	£4.99	999	250	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
SAQInternet http://www.saqnet.co.uk	£11.25	999	5	National Rate	Yes	Yes
U-NET http://www.u-net.net	£12.00	999	25	Local Rate	Yes	Yes

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YOUR AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE TO SUBSCRIPTION-FREE ISPS WHICH CHARGE ONLY FOR LOCAL CALL PHONE RATES

NAME AND URL	EMAIL ADDRESSES	WEB SPACE Mb	NEWS GROUPS	SUPPORT COSTS	V.90	128K ISDN
4TheNet http://www.4thenet.co.uk	999	999	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
Abel GRATIS Plus http://www.abelgratis.co.uk	999	50	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
Ace Internet http://www.ace-internet.co.uk	10	5	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Asian Biz http://www.asian-biz.net	15	10	Yes	National Rate	Yes	No
BlueCarrots Anywhere http://www.bluecarrots.com	15	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
BTopenworld Pay-as-you-go http://www.btopenworld.com	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Callnet UK http://www.callnetuk.com	5	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Chilly Hippo http://www.chilly-hippo.co.uk	999	50	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
Contact Box http://www.contactbox.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - £1.00	Yes	Yes
ConX http://www.conx.co.uk	999	20	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Doodah http://www.doodah.co.uk	25	999	Yes	Premium - £1.00	Yes	Yes
Earthlink http://www.earthlink.co.uk	999	25	No	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
Ecosse http://www.ecosse.net	999	999	No	N/A	Yes	Yes
EidosNet http://www.eidosnet.co.uk	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Fasthosts LoCall http://dial.fasthosts.co.uk	999	200	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	No
Firenet http://www.firenet.ws	999	999	Yes	Unknown	Yes	No
Fish http://www.fish.co.uk	999	0	Unknown	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Floom.net http://www.floom.net	0	0	No	N/A	Yes	No
Free Gratis http://www.freegratis.net	5	5	Yes	Standard BT	Yes	Yes
Free ISP http://www.freeisp.co.uk	999	25	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes
Free UK http://www.freeuk.net	999	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	No
Freebeeb http://www.beeb.net	999	20	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	No
FreeNet http://www.freenet.co.uk	999	25	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Freenetname http://www.freenetname.co.uk	999	20	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
Free-Online Free http://www.free-online.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
Freeserve http://www.freeserve.net	999	15	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
FreeUK http://www.freeuk.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	No
Freewire http://www.freewire.net	999	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
FreeZone http://www.freezone.co.uk	999	20	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	Yes
FSB Dial http://www.fsbdial.co.uk	999	0	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Games-World http://www.games-world.net	1	10	Yes	National Rate	Yes	Yes
Gay Webmasters Guild http://gay.webmastersguild.co.uk	20	0	No	National Rate	Yes	Yes
GayServe http://www.gayserve.co.uk	999	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
Get-The-Web http://www.get-the-web.com	999	100	No	Premium - 25p	Yes	No
Hot-Toast http://www.hot-toast.com	999	999	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
iC24 http://www.ic24.net	5	10	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
JellyPeople.com http://www.jellypeople.com	999	25	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	Yes
Jings http://www.jings.com	999	999	Yes	National Rate	Yes	No
LineOne http://www.lineone.net	5	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Madasafish http://www.madasafish.com	999	999	Yes	Premium - 25p	Yes	No
Minx http://www.minx.co.uk	999	999	Yes	Premium - 75p	Yes	Yes
Sparticus.net http://www.sparticus.net	999	25	Yes	Premium - 60p	Yes	Yes
StormNet http://www.storm-online.com	5	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	Yes
Tiscali Classic http://www.tiscali.co.uk	999	50	Yes	Premium - 50p	Yes	No
VirginNet http://www.virgin.net	5	10	Yes	Local Rate	Yes	No

TOP BUYS

Webcams

Philips Vesto Pro

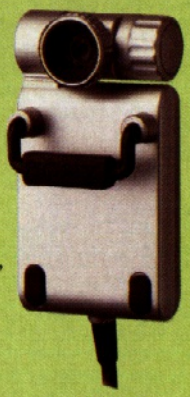
Practical internet BEST BUY ★★★★★

£60–70 inc VAT
www.pcstuff.phillips.com
What's good? Attractive little camera, with a good resolution. Natural colour
What's bad? It can be difficult to keep steady because the locking screw sometimes comes loose
Telephone: 0800 8689 4444
Verdict: ★★★★★

Creative Webcam Go Plus

£129
www.europe.creative.com
What's good? Innovative design. Can be used as a digital camera. Good range of features.
What's bad? Expensive. The digital camera aspect of the Go Plus is a tad gimmicky
Telephone: 01245 265265
Verdict: ★★★★

Sony CMR-PC2



£89.99
www.sony.co.uk
What's good? It's tiny, yet somehow manages to squeeze in the best picture quality we've seen yet
What's bad? The clip does nothing whatsoever, as far as we can tell
Telephone: 0800 262 37669
Verdict: ★★★★

Logitech Quickcam Web

£59.99
www.agfa.co.uk
What's good? Get free Web space and streaming with spotlife
What's bad? Average picture quality. TWAIN gremlins got under our skin
Telephone: 020 7309 0127
Verdict: ★★★

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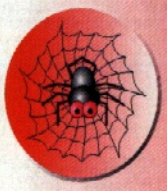

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.net magazine. Oct 2000

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Epson Compatible (Non Chipped)		
Twin Pack	(1Bk + 1Col)	£04.99
Four Pack	(2Bk + 2Col)	£09.49
Six Pack	(3Bk + 3Col)	£13.49
Eight Pack	(4Bk + 4Col)	£16.99
Single Black		£02.49
Five Black		£09.99
Single Colour		£03.49
Five Colour		£16.99

Hewlett Packard Compatible		
HP51626A	High Capacity	£09.99
HP51625A	High Capacity	£10.99
HP51629A	High Capacity	£09.99
HP51649A	High Capacity	£12.99
HP51645A	High Capacity	£09.99
C1823A	High Capacity	£14.99
C6578A	High Capacity	£20.99
C6614D		£09.99

Epson Compatibles (Chipped) Stylus 680/777 Photo 790/870/875/890/895/1270/1290		
Twin Pack	(1Bk + 1Col)	£11.99
Four Pack	(2Bk + 2Col)	£21.99
Six Pack	(3Bk + 3Col)	£29.99
Eight Pack	(4Bk + 4Col)	£35.99
Single Black		£05.99
Five Black		£24.99
Single Colour		£06.99
Five Colour		£29.99

Canon Compatible		
BCI-21	(1Bk + 1Col)	£03.49
BCI-3e Bk		£04.99
BCI-3e C M or Y		£03.99
BC-02		£09.99
BC-05		£10.99
BC-20		£10.99

Lexmark Compatible	
12A1970	£11.99
12A1980	£13.99

Inkjet Refills & Bulk Ink	
Bk + Col Refill Kit	£11.99
Black Refill Kit	£04.99
Colour Refill Kit	£07.99
Photo Colour Refill Kit	£05.99
60ml Black Ink	£03.49
60ml C, M or Y Ink	£03.99
250ml Black Ink	£09.99
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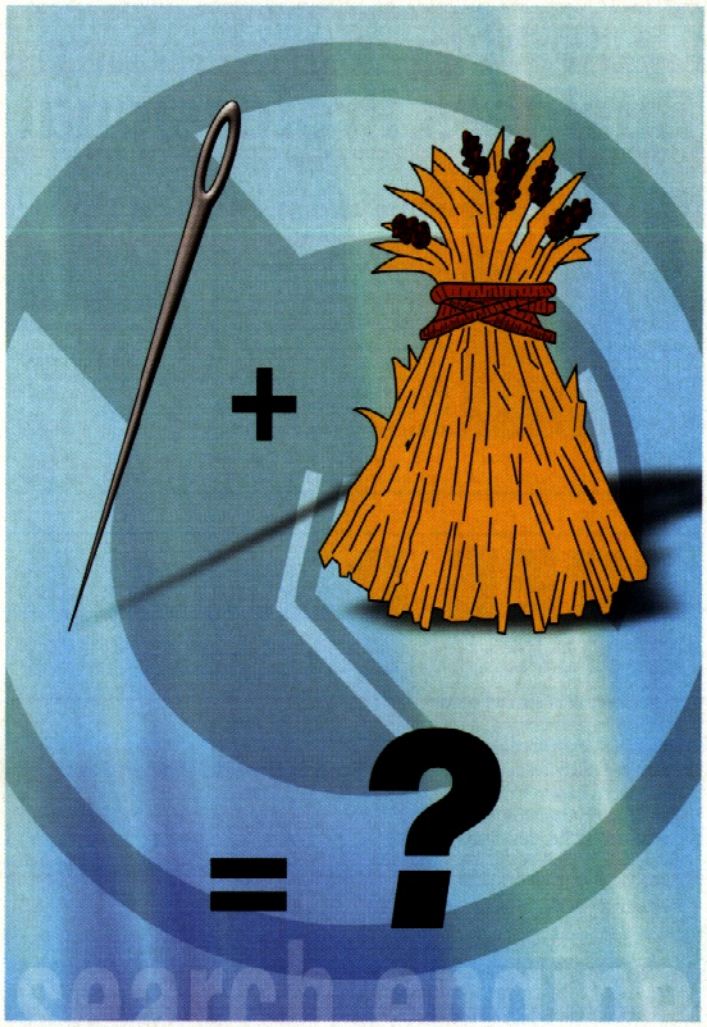

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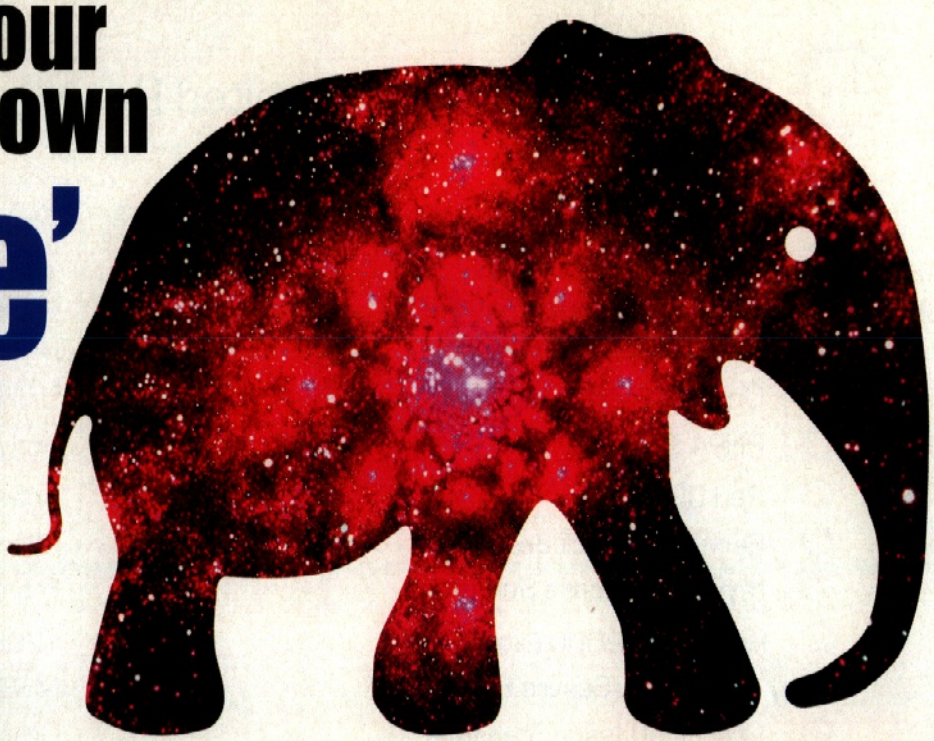

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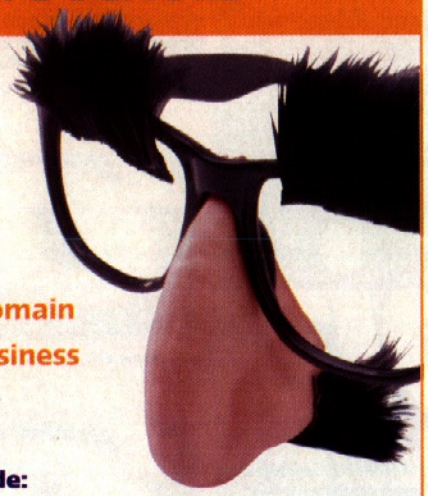

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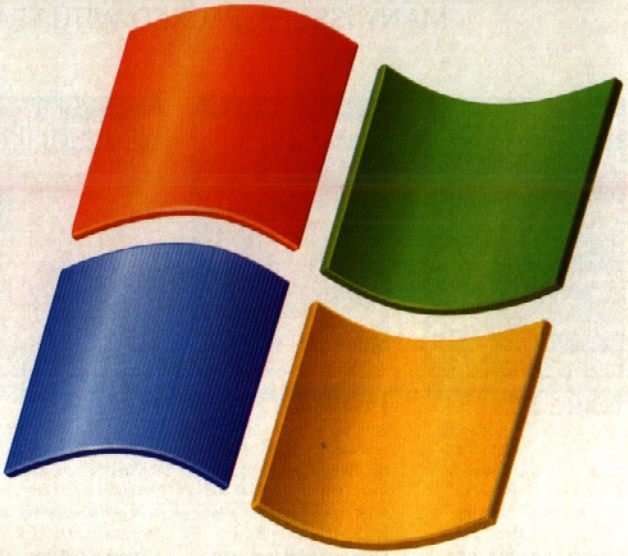
COMING UP IN ISSUE 66 OF PRACTICAL INTERNET

Power up Windows for the Net



The essential guide to getting the best possible performance from Windows – we'll show you how to make the Net really fly

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- **Tweak settings for faster Net connections**
- **Strip your OS down for extra efficiency**
- **Power tips for IE 6 and Outlook Express**

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Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 2JS

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MAGAZINE TEAM

Editor Paul Newman
pauln@paragon.co.uk
01202 200250
Managing Editor Geoff Harris
Technical Editor Thomas Watson
Group Art Editor Steve Gotobed
Senior Designer Paul Blachford
Senior Sub Editor Jo Cole
Staff Writer James Thornton

CONTRIBUTORS

David Bradforth, Rob Clymo, Jo Chipchase, Chris Ellison, Gerard Liston, Chris Miller, Net4Now, Clive Parker, James Seabright, Nick Sweeney, Nik Taylor, Roland Waddilove

COVERDISC SUPPORT

Coverdisc Support
If you have any difficulty with our coverdisc, please refer to the disc pages for contact information

Cover CD Production
Tom Cairns
tomc@paragon.co.uk

Multimedia Editor
Lee Cornish
lee@paragon.co.uk

ADVERTISING

Advertising Sales Manager
Jennifer Ross
(01202 200212)
jennyr@paragon.co.uk

Adv Sales Executive Robert Forsyth
(01202 209363)
robertf@paragon.co.uk
Copy Controllers Jo Spick, Lorraine Troughton

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION

Production Manager
Dave Osborne
Bureau Manager Chris Rees
Scanning/prepress Penny Johns
Circulation Manager Tim Harris
Tel: +44 (0) 1202 200200
Fax: +44 (0) 1202 200217

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING

Practical Internet magazine is available for licensing overseas. For details, please contact:
International Manager Cathy Blackman
Tel: +44 (0) 1202 200205
Fax: + 44 (0) 1202 200235
Email: cathb@paragon.co.uk

DIRECTORS

Editorial Director Damian Butt
Production Director Jane Hawkins
Circulation & Marketing Director Kevin Petley
Advertising Director Peter Cleall
Art Director Mark Kendrick
Finance Director Steven Boyd
Managing Director Mark Simpson

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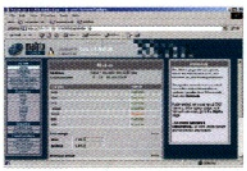
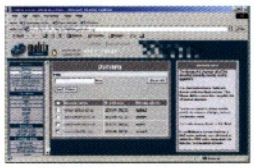
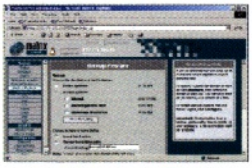

Control all your domains


View server status

System logs


Automatically backup and restore

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- Automatically backup your server

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